

POPULAR Computing WEEKLY

Amstrad PCW 9512 review inside

NEWS DESK
Spectrum
price cuts

SOFTWARE
ST Basics
compared

PCW Show
Floor plan
and stand
guide inside



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PCW Show Issue

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Sept 25-Oct 1 CONTENTS

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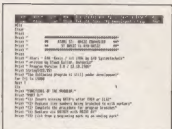
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18 Amstrad PCW 9512 The new Amstrad wordprocessor is one of the stars of this week's PCW Show. Ian Rook puts Joyce 2 through its paces.



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Top: Amstrad CPC. Second: Atari Basic. Above: Super Strike. Below: Moon Strike.

Games

- 58 New Releases** Your complete guide to all the programs released this week, including Moonstrike, Enterprize and Elite's Six Pak.



Executive editor Francis Jago. Deputy editor John Brissenden. Features editor Cliff Joseph. Technical editor Duncan Evans. Marketing manager Jeremy Kite. Advertisement manager David Osen. Advertisement executive Athena Peerman. Classified manager Susannah King. Classified executive Robert Cole. Editorial secretary Annmarie Altan. Managing editor Brendan Gore. Publisher Treg Phillips. Group Publisher Paul Coster. Chief executive Richard Hease. Financial director Brendan McGrath. Published by Focus Magazines, Greencoast House, Francis Street, London SW1P 1DG. Typeset by Magazine Typesetters, 6 Parnell Court, East Portway, Andover, Hampshire. Printed by McCorquodale Magazines, Andover, Hampshire. Distributed by S M Distribution, London SW9, Tel 01-274 8611, Telex 261643.
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Amstrad pulls back on CPCs

AMSTRAD is chopping £50 off Spectrum Plus 3 from this week, and £10 off the Plus II. Both machines will now be bundled with a joystick and 17 games.

The move has increased speculation about the future of the CPC range of 8-bit Amstrad machines, particularly as it has

emerged that WH Smith is dropping it. Advertising for the CPC has been cancelled with a number of leading computer magazines, and WHS computer buyer Ian Laune admitted last week that the chain is no longer handling it.

"It is not a line that we will continue selling," he said.



CPC: dealers say demand is holding up.

The future of the range has been in doubt for some time.

An Amstrad spokesman denied that the cuts have been made in response to trade pressure and described the an-

nouncement as a "commercial move". He said he had no information on the future of the CPCs.

The Plus 3 now sells for £199, while the new Plus 2 is £139.

Teleconference doubts

MICRONET is soon to introduce a teleconferencing facility, for 'private' or 'closed group' discussions.

The facility will work with both viewdata and 80-column scrolling formats (another new addition to Prestel's features) and will be available on a pay-as-you-go basis.

But recent allegations by the likes of Independent Television's Roger Cook over illegal use of bulletin boards for child pornography contacts, have raised doubts about the ethics

and the legality of a 'closed user group' where topics of conversations will not be dictated.

David Rosenbaum, Miconet's Marketing Manager understood the possible difficulties, but commented:

"Conversations that take place in locked rooms will be totally private and confidential - that's part of the attraction of the teleconferencing system."

● Next week *Popular* will be looking in more depth at Miconet's new developments.

GST launches Desktop Publisher

AT A press launch last Wednesday, GST showed off their latest product, *Timeworks Desktop Publisher*. Available in England from November, there will be an Atari ST version costing £39 and a version for the Amstrad PC and compatibles, the price for which was undecided at time of going to press.

GST's Chris Scheybeier pointed out that the company had a good background in the area, with their programmers having written the *First Word* suite of word processors as well as producing specialist software for electronic typesetting systems used by local and national newspapers.

At a sneak preview before the official press launch, *Popular* had a chance to see the program and its extensive list of features. One advantage over the competition will be the wealth of printer support, with drivers already written for nearly all 9 and 24 pin matrix printers as well as Postscript and HP Laser printers, and the option of sending postscript files to disc for professional typesetting. No software currently supports the Atari Laser printer because Atari have yet to confirm the specification, but GST promise one soon.

Being based on the GEM operating system, *Timeworks*

will be fully menu driven with optional "short cuts" to duplicate menu commands for those who prefer to leave their hands on the keyboard. GST in the past have written "mouse only" software.

A sophisticated graphics editor, similar to *Easy Draw*, will be included within the main program to create either stand alone illustrations or to embellish imported pictures. So far the programs that *Timeworks* will support include all those producing GEM format files (*GEM Draw*, *GEM Paint*, *Easy Draw*, etc) and *Degas Elite*, *Neochrome* and *PC-Paintbrush*. A superior picture manipulation facility is promised, to alter picture size without the usual distortions.

Text can either be entered directly or be prepared on a separate word processor and imported. Text can be imported in either ASCII, *WordStar*, *First Word* or *Word Writer* files.

Other features include automatic hyphenation and frame rejection, so that if a block of text has a picture placed over it, the software will automatically reformat the area. GST had yet to decide on the number of fonts, but said that at least there would be a Times look-alike and a few special headline fonts in the larger point sizes.



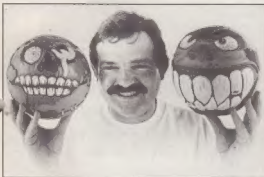
Balls go bananas

OCEAN Software have acquired the rights to produce a computer game based on the Madballs range of toys.

Pictured is Ocean Director Jon Woods and two of the Madballs, which are produced by American company TFCF (Those Characters From Cleveland) Inc. In the game you will

play the part of Dustbrain, a sort of Madball Thatcher, whose aim is to eliminate his political opponents, Screamin' Mammie and Slobulus, by controlling the planet's supply of cabbage and fish heads.

The Madballs game will be released in December for Amstrad CPCs, C64 and Spectrum.



Popular needs a Staff Writer

POPULAR Computing Weekly needs you! We have a vacancy for a Staff Writer, and you could be the right person for the job.

The position will involve writing copy for our news pages, as well as helping out on the rest of the magazine with features, reviews and interviews.

Knowledge of the home computer industry is important, but so is the ability to write, learn quickly, work to tight schedules, and fit into a small, friendly

team. The ideal candidate will be young, enthusiastic and looking for his/her first steps into an exciting career in computer journalism.

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SOFTWARE HOTLINES

Dilemma

A well known software house sends you a press release about their next release, based on some daft boardgame.

Do you chuck it in the bin and forget all about it, and risk upsetting the company (thereby missing out on lunch at the PCW show), or do you praise it to the skies?

This is the sort of problem you'll have to face if you buy *Scraples*, the computer version of the well-known boardgame being planned by **Leisure Genius**.

The game has over 200 questions, all of which allow you to drop someone else in the merde, and if you can't find anyone willing to play the game with you then the computer has 14 preprogrammed personalities that you can play against.

Virgin Games (which owns **Leisure Genius**), has given up basing games on the real-life (7) adventures of Richard Branson, and have decided to license the rights to the *Action Force* range of toys, which is probably a good move. And, this very moment a copy of their *How To Be A Complete Bastard* game is biding its way to me, so there'll probably be a review in next week.

Does anybody out there remember the fuss that we used to make just before the release of a new *Ultimate* game? Well, **Mastertronic** have just acquired the rights to rerelease *Ultimate's* old titles on their Ricochet budget label. So now games like *Knighthore*, *Alien 8*, and *Sabrewulf* which

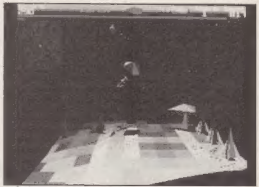
probably got more rave reviews for *Ultimate* than any other games in the history of the universe, can be yours for just £1.99.

Having tied up James Dean for a licensing deal, **US Gold** has also added Sir Charles Chaplin to their stable of stars. They've come up with a game in which you have to choose a script for a silent movie, then cast it and gather together all the props and scenery. The action in the film is made up of arcade sequences that you take part in as the Tramp character, and you play these back to edit them into a complete film for release in the cinemas, with your score depending on the audience's reaction. It all sounds very odd (US Gold keep using the word 'concept', which is always worrying).

Also at the show will be **Zech**, **Superior's** new *Archimedes* game that we mentioned recently. We can now let you have a look at it with the nice little screen shot below. The *Archimedes* is also about to get its first graphics package, in the form of *Artisan* from **Clare's Micro Supplies**. The machine isn't in the shops yet, but there's already more software for it than for the +3 Spectrum.

More news of **Hewson's** *Magnatron*; this is Steve Turner's follow up to *Quezaatron* and features the continuing adventures of the KLZP 'droid - this time onboard a space station, where it has to destroy a number of nuclear reactors. There's a screen shot above (to make up for the upside down one that we had on last week's cover, and for the screenshot of a non-Hewson game in a recent Hewson review. Sorry about that, Andrew).

Cliff Joseph



More news
on
pages 6 & 11

NEXT WEEK

Date with danger

Popular Computing Weekly has achieved the near impossible and obtained an audience with Alan Sugar.

Is Amstrad dropping the CPC Range? Will there be any more new models? What is to become of the Spectrum range? All these questions and more will be answered in next week's interview.

The big three

Can the Acorn Archimedes really compete with the likes of the Commodore Amiga and Atari ST?

In this full test, *Popular* looks in depth at these three machines and draws some controversial conclusions.

The Mild One

Is Bill Stealey, the President of Microprose, really as 'wild' as everyone makes out? *Popular* met the man behind the mouth and drew some surprising conclusions.

PCW News

The show may be over, but the reports go on. *Popular* will not only bring you the first full report of the show, it will also be the most complete.

Pages dedicated to 8 and 16 bit software, as well as news and views on the latest hardware from the show.

Popular will, as always, be the magazine that gives you the low-down on the latest developments.

Deep pockets

MIRROSOFT has announced a deal with W H Smith to display DTP packages in its top fifty stores, and has slashed the price of *Fleet Street Editor Plus* by £20.

The selected outlets will be stocking the whole Mirrosoft Fleet Street range of DTP software, including the PCW DTP package which now costs £49.95.



Fleet Street Editor Plus

PCW Show

Don't miss next week's *Popular* for a full report with all the news and gossip from the tenth annual show.

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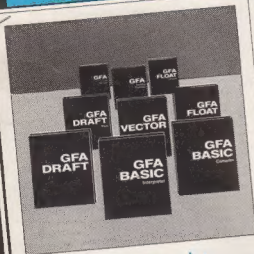
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BMF steps in on piracy

THE BMF last week announced that it is to mount a major campaign against software piracy, something which is estimated to cost the UK computer industry around £150 million every year.

Welcoming action taken by FAST (the Federation Against Software Theft), and the arrival of new legislation to combat the problem, BMF spokesman Clive Booth warned:

"Legislation and litigation can only address the worst

abusers. We need a parallel effort to educate both business and the public at large about the issues.

"People need to understand that buying software is effectively buying a licence to use information, and not a 'buy and do as you please' commodity," he added.

"It's a little like a road fund licence. There are rules and guidelines which should be observed wherever you go and it should be the same with software."

Addictive fixes it for a new Nixon

ADDICTIVE Games, a part of the Prism Leisure Corporation PLC, has recently re-launched *President*, a game designed to test your ability to rule effectively in the nation.

Priced at £2.99 this time around, the game gives you the chance to become the next Roosevelt or Nixon (although the game seems not to incorporate such unplanned disasters as Chappaquiddick and Watergate).

Programmed by Kevin Toms, the man responsible for the original strategy success, *Foot-*

ball Manager, *President* includes such day to day traumas as oil wars, balance of payments difficulties, and electoral popularity.

President will be re-released on September 23rd, and will be available for the Amstrad CPC range of computers, as well as the Spectrum and Commodore 64.

Softek's budget label at Show

FOLLOWING the launch of its ACE arcade label, leading software house Softek International has also announced its plans to enter the budget market with a second new label.

The *Micro Selection* range will be launched at this week's PCW show, and the initial batch of releases will include repackaged hits such as *The Boxing* and *Sky Runner*. Future releases will be a mixture of both original titles and further re-releases, though there are no definite plans to repackaging any old Softek or Edge titles as yet.

The new label will be priced at £1.99, but there is also likely to be budget material available for the ST and Amiga later this year, probably to be aimed at below the £10 mark.

A Softek spokesperson told *Popular*:

"This isn't second-hand material. We're very excited about launching the two new labels, and we know that this is going to be a sure-fire hit for Christmas."

Equinox may see the light of day

TYNESOFT, the rapidly expanding games software house, has purchased Mikro Gen from the GSD receiver.

This is an odd turn of fate for Mikro Gen who were sold Colin Courtney, Managing Director of Tynesoft, said that most of the existing titles would be released in Tynesoft's Microvalue range, but that some of the as yet unreleased software (such as the long awaited ST version of *Equinox*) would be released at full price later in the year.

The purchase concludes a good week, and indeed year, for Tynesoft which published accounts showing turnover up to over £1,000,000 and profits up 200%.

The dispute over the Sparklers titles which Maynard International recently bought from GSD has been settled.

A total of 120 Sparklers items will now appear either under the Sparklers imprint itself otherwise on Alternative or Top Ten.

Glentop brought to book with GFA title

GLENTOP Press Ltd, publishers of *GFA Basic*, has announced details of a forthcoming book on the language. The book, written by *GFA Basic*'s author, Frank Ostrowski, will cover programming aspects of GEM, graphics, and other applications. It is due for release in mid-October and will be over 280 pages and be bundled with a disc containing numerous example programs.

The much delayed 3-D graphics package for the Atari ST,

GFA vector, will now be released at the PCW show, part of the delay being due to poor duplication of the German translated manual.

The program, which integrates fully with *GFA Basic*, features up to 1024 points, 1024 lines, 32 objects. It also sports rotation in one degree steps upwards, about X, Y and Z axes and scaling factors from 1.64th to 8 times.

Contact Glentop Press on 01-441 4130.

DIARY DATES

SEPTEMBER

23-27 September
Personal Computer World Show

Olympia, London

Details: Latest hardware, software and peripherals for business and leisure computing.

Price: £3, £2 - (parties over 10)
Organiser: Montibud
01-486 1951

OCTOBER

15-17 October
Desktop Publishing Show
Business Design Centre, London

Details: Demonstrations of latest hardware and peripheral, plus seminars and user clinics.

Organiser: Database Exhibitions, 061-456 8383

NOVEMBER

14 November
National Einstein Exhibition
National Motorcycle Museum, Birmingham

Details: Einstein software etc.
Price: 50p
Organiser: UKEUG (0473) 49507

Prices, dates and venues of shows can vary, and you are therefore strongly advised to check with the show organiser before attending. We cannot accept responsibility for any alterations to show arrangements.

Wonderful, wonderful life

As a regular reader of PCW I never cease to be amazed at Kenn Garroch's ability to answer the many diverse problems as posed in his PEEK & POKE column. How can one person know so much about so many different computers, be it a technical or programming problem, and then again have time to compose the sometimes quite involved programs required as answers. He certainly receives my admiration and I'm sure that of your other readers. It's good to know that there's someone to fall back on during these times of computer advancement.

John McCleave
Dorset

Cruel world

As a serious computer user I feel compelled to write regarding the advert that Commodore has been running about the Amiga A500.

I feel that it's rather cruel of Commodore to categorise other home and business computers as fit for the toy cupboard.

In fact I doubt if many serious programmers and business users would ever need to use a computer with a blitter chip, four channel stereo sound and brilliant colour graphics - unless of course they are games programmers.

Judging by the large percentage of games-oriented software on the Amiga, I fail to see why Commodore cannot claim its A500 to be no more than a toy as well. After all a toy is a machine whose major function in life is to play games.

And of course if the computer's sound, colour graphics and screen handling is better than the other computers', then you have - a super toy.

Can you see an accountant using a complex spreadsheet needing all that?

As for the speed of the Amiga A500 I suppose it is relatively fast (with its 16-bit databus and a cpu speed of 7.14MHz when compared to, say, the PC or other 8-bit machines).

But when it is compared to the Atari 520STFM (also with a 16-bit databus and a cpu speed of 8MHz) or the 640k Sinclair QL (which only has an 8-bit databus and a cpu speed of 7.5MHz) the A500 is somewhat

slow. Although the A500 is faster when dealing with the screen and sound because of its dedicated chips in this area.

Don't get me wrong. I am not writing this letter to bring the wrath of Commodore and the Amiga users upon me.

I just think it's sad when a reputable firm like Commodore which has been in the computer industry for a number of years should sit below the belt and go computer bashing isn't there enough computer-bashing going on among rival computer users without the need for the big companies joining in?

Finally, on a lighter note, I think that the Amiga A500 is a wonderful machine (if you can afford it) and I shall be saving up my pennies for one.

A terminal junkie somewhere in the British Isles.

We look forward to other reader's comments on this. Your comment regarding business users not needing the Amiga's graphics capabilities has also been made by senior industry observers.

But surely Commodore is free to pitch its advertising as it sees fit?

A not quite right knight

With reference to PCW issue 11/9/87 On pages 10 and 11 you carry an interview with Sir Clive Sinclair in which reference is made to the Acorn Archimedes having long been an admirer of Sir Clive. I am sorry to see him making such remarks that bring back memories of the original BBC contract comments from Sir Clive. I am sad to say that he has got his facts wrong, or if he hasn't then the programs used to test the speed were very badly written.

Sir Clive states that multiplying two numbers takes 23 micro seconds on the Archimedes. Apart from being a sweeping statement without any explanation or qualification it is wrong.

There is no indication of the size of the numbers to be multiplied so I will give details of two separate cases. To multiply two numbers together to produce a 32 bit result will have a worst case time of 2.125 micro seconds. This is made up of 1 's' cycle and 16 'i' cycles. An 's' cycle takes 125 nano-seconds in RAM and 250 nano-seconds in ROM. All 'i' cycles take 125

nano-seconds. A multiply by 0 or 1 takes 125 nano-seconds.

If you require double precision with a 64 bit result then using a sensible routine results in a worst case time of 5 micro seconds. Certainly a lot faster than Sir Clive claims. The way in which code is written is crucial on a RISC processor and where 'sloppy' programming might not make much difference on an 80386 it certainly does on the ARM. For instance if you include branches everywhere the code will be a lot slower. It is often much better to repeat small sections of code than call them as a sub routine.

I am confident that the Archimedes will be a world beater just as long as we British don't kill ourselves first.

Dave Clare
director
Clare's Micro Supplies

Eprom, and on...

Iwould like to suggest or request that PCW publishes an article covering the subject of EPROMs and burners.

The situation is that so many devices now contain EPROMs or ROMs, many cases programmed with annoying characteristics that many an owner would dearly love to amend. I refer to everything from video recorders ('time-out' and revert to channel 1 after 2 minutes), car alarms (delay periods) and others.

Nearer to your heart, of course, are computer ROMs with well-known bugs which the owner knows how to correct, and would like to do so. Or stretches of unused ROM locations where the owner would like to add some facilities. Second hand 8-bit computers can be picked up cheaply enough for many of your readers to want to experiment, if only they had the facilities or knowledge to burn an EPROM!

If a chip could be taken out of some gadget and paged at a known part of a computer's memory map, and assuming that the type of Processor in the gadget could be seen (frequently Z80s are used), then most of your readers would have too much difficulty to disassemble (Even if their computer uses a different processor, it isn't too hard to write a disassembler in BASIC).

It would be very helpful if you

could publish something covering the following points for the usual 8 and 16-bit home micros:

- 1) How is the memory map made up, in terms of pin connections? In other words, how can you tell which memory chips on a board appear where in the map?
 - 2) What are the pins on RAM chips and EPROMs?
 - 3) Is there an EPROM burner available for each of the common home micros? If so, perhaps you could list suppliers?
 - 4) Is it generally possible to replace ROMs with EPROMs? Are response times as good?
 - 5) In general terms, what would the hardware need to be, to attach a computer's user port for the purpose of reading in or paging the contents of an external memory chip? I am thinking it would be good to know how to make up a 'black box', perhaps with a push-button on it.
- I feel that a sizeable proportion of your readership know enough and have enough programming ability to want to do this kind of thing, but would like to know more hardware, which is always the stumbling block.

Peter Etskine
Essex

Phew, we'll see what he can do to help!

No money for non players

Iwas fascinated to read that Commodore can afford to shell out one and a quarter million quid for Chelsea football club, but they still can't afford to bring the price of the Amiga down to a level where it is truly competitive with the ST.

Most of the people I know who use/buy home computers' nearest contact with the sport is through playing the venerable 'Football Manager'. Even the ones that do watch football would have much rather had the money off their CBM computers.

Alan Lenton
London

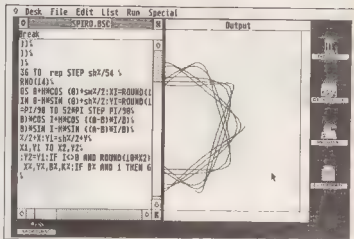
PS I wonder if any of your readers who took up the Amiga voucher offer noticed a certain lack of enthusiasm on the part of the dealer they bought from. This may be to do with the fact that CBM is making the dealers pay £55 out of every £100 they give off - still they have to raise £1.25m from somewhere!

STacks of Basic

Disc-based Basic makes the Atari ST a natural for third-party variations, but not all versions are equally useful, and Atari's own update is the worst of all, as Duncan Evans finds on the test bench.

Unlike most eight bit micros, the Atari ST has two features which encourage third party implementations of Basic. The first is that the language is not built in, but supplied on disc. The result is that Atari Basic is unbelievably awful.

So which Basic do you go for? Stick with the supplied Atari Basic, or go for Gtendrop's GFA Basic, Computer Concepts' Fast Basic or indulge in HiSoft's Basic Compiler? In this article we set out the relative merits and drawbacks of each product and deal with them chronologically.



Fast Basic: excellent support for Gem, but sloppy cursor control

PCW test	Table 1			
	Atari	Fast	GFA	HiSoft
1	0.9	0.145	0.105	0.048
2	2.8	0.58	0.395	0.056
3	5.34	1.305	1.025	0.196
4	8.03	1.55	1.01	0.258
5	8.03	1.505	1.085	0.263
6	14.2	2.575	1.765	0.536
7	20.9	4.11	2.845	1.026
8	10.0	2.725	2.945	1.411
Avg:	8.85	1.801	1.397	0.475
Circle (75)		0.34	0.055	0.075
Solid Circle		0.34	0.17	0.21
Box		0.09	0.0175	n/a
(130sq)				
Solid Box		0.09	0.0475	0.075

Product	Table 2			
	Atari	Fast	GFA	HiSoft
Price (disk)	Free	45.95	45.95	79.95
Editor	4	■	7	6
Features				
Ease of Use	1	■	9	7
Graphics	5	8	8	7
Sound	7	3	7	7
GEM	1	8	7	7
File	6	8	7	7
Handling Structure	4	7	8	9
Overall	■	8	9	7

Atari Basic

Atari Basic sports the most unhelpful and unusable editor that I for one have ever encountered. Half the time it doesn't do what it's supposed to.

One of the more annoying features is that there is no wraparound on the windows so that when a line reaches the right hand edge the whole program lurches left, and you lose track of what was on that side of the screen.

The entire thing is unbearable. ■ program with, considering the alternatives.

As far as commands go, Atari Basic just about measures up to the good 8-bit implementations, but is sadly lacking in a number of vital areas. Graphics are only adequately catered for, although there are no sprite commands, with CIRCLE and ELLIPSE, and filled versions thereof. LINEF and a FILL that allows use of ■ the ST's inbuilt styles. On the subject of colour there is ■ the ridiculous situation ■ having 512 colours, and not having a command to change the 16 colour pallets you start with (in low resolution).

File handling ■ dealt with much better as you can load and save not only Basic programs but blocks ■ memory with BSAVE and BLOAD. For dealing with records and data files there are OPEN, PRINT#, CLOSE, GET#, INPUT#, LINE INPUT# and WRITE# to juggle with.

Possibly the only area of Atari Basic that can hold its own ■ the sound department

The SOUND command lets you control three music and a white noise channel with volume, notes played, octave, and duration parameters. WAVE, controls the waveforms used in SOUND via envelope, shape, period and delay parameters. Better than the facilities offered by Fast Basic and just about comparable with everyone else's.

As far as structure goes you can have GOSUBS and GOTOs aplenty. There aren't any procedures, REPEAT UNTIL or DO LOOP constructs although WHILE, WEND and IF THEN ELSE are supported. Pretty poor fare indeed.

The next black mark against this language is ■ the provision of GEM commands. There aren't any. Want to read the mouse, use pull down menus, alert boxes? Tough. The only option is write your own routines which poke values into CONTROL, INTIN and PTIN arrays, and then call the required operating system routine with VDISYS for the VDI, or use GEMSYS and its arrays for the AES.

So, having determined that only the poor and the mad program ■ Atari Basic it might have come as some relief to those thinking of purchasing an ST that Metacomco MCG Basic will be bundled with the machine in the new year. Unfortunately MCG Basic can only be viewed as the finished version of what Atari is currently bundling. Most of the bugs are fixed and there are more commands, especially in the graphics department, which includes the desperately need-

continued on page 15 ►

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◀ continued from page 13

ed mouse and RGB ones. Low level access to the BIOS and XBIOS has been improved but alas, alas, the silly people have left the editor exactly as it was! The stupidity of this leaves me speechless.

Fast Basic

Having observed how cumbersome the Atari Basic editor was, Computer Concepts, veterans of the BBC market, sought to produce one that rectified the faults and provided a complex and comprehensive programming environment.

Well, the editor is nothing if not packed with useful features. GEM is supported both from the point of desk top accessories and easy mouse interpretation, alert boxes, windows, drop down menus, and shrinking and expanding boxes.

Up to ten programs can be held in memory at one time, and control is easily switched between them. The early stages of programming development this is certainly handy as you can store your main program in one segment and then test subroutines in the others.

Word processing like options are available to cut and paste sections of programs, and in the same vein you can search and replace items. Having cut a block you can even paste it into a different programming segment, so the testing subroutines concept mentioned earlier is made even easier.

If it all sounds like a bed of roses then beware, because there are a couple of weeds in this particular garden. Compared with the Atari Basic window system, Fast Basic's edit window, output window and, usually concealed, immediate windows are a definite improvement. But not so that programming becomes as easy as using the GFA Basic editor.

Once again there's no wraparound on the window and the manner in which text disappearing off one end is handled leaves much to be desired. It's better than Atari Basic but then that's not saying an awful lot. The other point is that cursor control is very sloppy, long after you take your finger off the cursor or delete keys the cursor continues to romp along.

As far as commands go, Fast Basic scores heavily. All the GEM graphics primitives are available as direct commands. From patterned lines to solid boxes with rounded edges, ellipses, circles, solid or empty. One of my favourites is the TEXTSCROLL command which scrolls the contents of the text window. You specify the destination location and off the thing flies, superbly smooth, exquisitely fast. Text handling is undoubtedly best catered for by Fast Basic.

Structured programming is quite well served with IF...THEN...ELSE...ENDIF, DEF PROC and PROC, WHILE...WEND, and REPEAT...UNTIL. Strangely absent though is a DO...LOOP and EXIT LOOP construct. Fast Basic supports the usual BLOAD and BSAVE and supplies a compre-

hensive selection of file handling commands. Based on the BBC commands of old, OPENIN and OPENOUT deal with opening files for read/write operations. Also OPENUP, BGET, BPUT, PTR, GETREC, PURREC, PRINT and EXIT, which returns the length of a file, add to a collection which provides every means of file handling that your heart desires.

As mentioned earlier, GEM is very well supported for the simpler functions like reading the mouse and dialogue boxes, programming is straightforward and easy. For some of the more complex GEM functions the manual abandons all hope of teaching the unconverted and recom-

that you can edit in 80 columns and still use the 16 colour mode! Only HiSoft's Basic Compiler has anything like a similar feature.

At the top of the edit screen is a black bar containing all the cut, paste, block move, and search and replace functions. You can either point at them with the mouse or press the relevant Function Key.

What is odd looking about GFA programs is that concatenation is not allowed. This, combined with automatic indenting gives listings a very structured look. Once again there is no wraparound (there isn't on any of these products) but GFA handles lines that are greater than the screen length a good deal more intelligently. For one thing with

```

Save | Save:R | Quit | New | Bk | Sta | Replace | Pg up | Text | G | Direct | Run
Load | Merge | List | Block | Bk | End | Find | Pg down | Insert | Flip | Test

PCIS
Clear
Print
Print "
Print "
Print "
Print "
Print "
Print "
Print " Atari - GFA - Basic / (c) 1986 by GFA Systemtechnik"
Print " written by Klaus Keller, Herdecke"
Print " Program Version 3.0 / 10.10.1986"
Print Strings(55,95)
Print "The following program is still under development"
For T=1 To 15000
Next T
Cls
Print "FUNCTIONS OF THE PROGRAM:"
Print "PART A:"
Print "(1) Insert missing GOTO's after THEN or ELSE"
Print "(2) Replace line numbers being branched to with markers"
Print "(3) Complete the procedure for program branches"
Print "(4) Replace all GOTO's with PRINT AT"
Print "(5) List from a beginning mark to an ending mark"

```

GFA Basic: incredibly fast, and very easy to edit - even in colour

mends you get a book on the subject instead.

GFA Basic

After sweeping across Europe and making large inroads into the American market SystemTechnik's GFA Basic reached the UK shores. To be duly marketed by Glentop.

GFA Basic's main claim to fame, if you believe all you hear, is that it is marginally faster than Fast Basic. In fact the programs run at an incredible speed, and the difference between it and Fast Basic becomes very noticeable when using graphics.

All this is highly laudable - but what makes me favour GFA rather than Fast Basic is the editor. It undoubtedly has less features, and you can't have program segments, but what more than makes up for this is that the editor supports two screens. The edit screen and the display, which you also type commands in directly from Switching between the two is easy, and there are no annoying windows to get in the way (unless your program uses them of course).

The edit screen works, if you are in low or medium resolution, in medium res mode so

only one command statement per line. You're unlikely to run off the end of the screen. But, if you do, then only the line that you are entering scrolls off to the left. And it only does one character at a time, as you type them in at the other end of the line.

GFA Basic supports virtually the same graphics commands as Fast Basic, fills, boxes, circles, ellipses, arcs, polygons, various text styles and also a number of blitting operations. GET and PUT read a specified section of memory into a string and then spat it back down on the screen again. Fast Basic and HiSoft Basic also contain these commands but the Fast Basic ones are not as impressive in terms of speed, and the HiSoft ones are very clumsy to use. As an example, if you cut a square, eight pixels by eight, you can spat it at the rate of 230 per second! Even larger areas are still gloriously fast. For whole screens though, there are a couple of dedicated commands, not seen on the other Basics, namely SGET and SPUT which simply read an entire screen into a string and then transfer it back again.

The audio department is covered as well

continued on page 17 ▶

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Saved! by HiSoft
Customer and Press comments

Could never be without Saved! A useful piece of software!
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Superb! Very useful and well presented. Our customers.

Saved! looks like a comfortable winner in all departments.
ST Update 7/87.
This has got to be good value for money by anyone's way
of thinking. Atari ST User 7/87.
Using a rating scale of 0 to 10 we'd give Saved! 15
ST Applications 6/87.

DevpacST
Customer and Press comments

A very professional and excellent piece of software. Nice
documentation. Very powerful, excellent manual. A
programmer's best friend. Superb! Our customers.

This package is strongly recommended. Atari ST User 7/87.
DevpacST is a well-designed, well-implemented. HiSoft should
be congratulated for a job well done. Byte 11/86.
DevpacST is the assembler analog of Turbo Pascal ... it is by
far the easiest and fastest assembler
package to use. CL 10/86.

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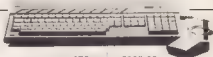
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◀ continued from page 15

as Atari Basic and HiSoft, and thus better than Fast Basic, with BEEP, SOUND and WAVE.

File handling is pretty good, although it falls short of the excesses offered by Fast Basic. What is done better are the poke and peek commands. GFA Basic uses POKE, DPOKE, and LPOKE for single, double and four byte operations, while Fast uses indirect operators such as ? and * which can hardly be said to be as friendly. If you prefix the GFA commands with an @ you can poke @ the supervisory mode of the 68000, ie, reserved storage space where you are normally not allowed.

When it comes to structure, GFA Basic is a little odd in that its procedures are labelled PROC name(var) but are accessed with GOSUB name(var) and recalled with RETURN. Make no mistake though, quite though they may sound, these are procedures and you can pass variables and have local variables as well.

The rather commands in this group are IF THEN ELSE, ENDIF DO LOOP, REPEAT UNTIL and WHILE. WEND a good selection, only bettered by HiSoft Basic's similar but more flexible, structures.

As I've mentioned GFA Basic is very fast but there are instructions built in to make programs run even faster. INC and DEC increment and decrement a named variable by one, and make counting even faster.

Access to GEM is something of an oddity. On the one hand you have wonderfully simple mouse and dialogue box commands, and on the other, there's the rather complex, and poorly explained, menu commands. Conversely, one area where GFA Basic completely outstrips Fast is in providing low level access to things like the BIOS and XBIOS.

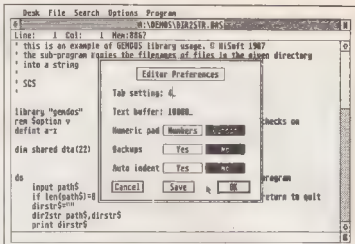
GFA Basic is good, very good in fact. But wait, the German programmers are working on version three of the program which will be a major revision. Amongst the plans at this stage are those to add another 150-200 commands to the interpreter. And almost unbelievably, they expect the thing to run up to twice as quickly!

HiSoft Basic Compiler

The latest Basic into the fray is the HiSoft Basic compiler which is obviously not an interpreter like the others, but a text editor and a compiler. Programs are thus written using the editor and then compiled either to memory or to disc.

One of the major selling points about HiSoft Basic is that it will compile standard Atari Basic programs without change, although of this I'm somewhat suspicious. The advantages provided by this product are the compatibility mentioned, a usable programming environment, and an extended command list. Oh, yes, your programs will naturally run much, much faster as well.

The first thing you can't help but notice is that the text editor only runs in medium or high resolution modes. So, for applications



HiSoft Basic: a bit of an oddity, but a useful adjunct to Atari Basic

that run in low resolution you'll have to use the SCREEN 1 command at the start and SCREEN 1 at the end.

The editor itself is very spartan looking, and its features reflect that. Lines can be deleted or inserted and blocks of lines shuffled around and deleted. The commands are all available from the keyboard and are similar to those used in Wordstar. It's all very simple to use but doesn't match GFA Basic's, or the complexities of Fast Basic either.

The graphics commands are just the same as Atari Basic's with one or two important additions. POINT reads the colour of a specified pixel, and SCREEN is used for selecting the screen mode although you should note that only TOS or TTP programs should use this command as the GEM AES and VDI don't like screen mode changes from within a program. Not many additions there, I'm sure you'll agree. There are however more. A lot of functions and commands are available on the disc as machine code routines, contained within libraries. You must use the LIBRARY command and the library name (ie LIBRARY XBIOS) to access those particular functions, which are then loaded off the disk and incorporated into your compiled program. While this is a good idea in theory, it should after all mean that your programs are compiled more efficiently, in practice it results in quite a messy situation.

The actual libraries are the BIOS (Basic Input/Output), XBIOS (Extended BIOS), GENMODS (the operating system), GENVDI (Virtual Device Interface) and the GEMAES (Application Environment Services). More than any other version of Basic, HiSoft gives you access to these routines within the ST. While the manual explains many of these functions well or adequately, some of the explanations are unclear to say the least. There's lots of good stuff here but expect hard work getting at it.

Having seen that Atari Basic supported few commands for structured programs, HiSoft have certainly made an effort in this department with procedures, DO...LOOP, REPEAT...END REPEAT, and WHILE...WEND. What gives HiSoft Basic the thumbs up over the others here is that the DO...LOOP construct can have WHILE and UNTIL added to the DO, and WEND, WHILE and UNTIL at the bottom end. Undeniably flexible.

Probably Atari Basic's second biggest failing is that there are no commands to control the GEM interface. HiSoft have made improvements in this direction as well with MOUSEAE, and a plethora of window commands. Other support can be found in the libraries of course.

Conclusions

Both GFA Basic and Fast Basic are very good implementations of the language. If you have half a mind to develop 68000 machine code programs as well, then your best bet is Fast Basic as it contains an inbuilt assembler. The Fast Basic manual is generally better than that supplied with GFA Basic (which was translated from German after all) but despite these two points I would heartily recommend GFA Basic instead, and it should be noted that there is a rather good compiler for the languages as well.

HiSoft Basic is an oddity, I wouldn't recommend it over either of the two major Basics because I don't particularly like the way it works, I would say it is worthwhile for anyone who is a committed Atari Basic programmer to purchase HiSoft Basic because of the speed increase and more friendly environment.

As far as the new version of Atari Basic is concerned, I'm afraid we can write that off already.

Duncan Evans

IT'S THE

Ian Rook gives the once over to Amstrads eagerly awaited successor to the best selling PCW 8256, imaginatively named the PCW 9512.

The Amstrad PCW was code-named **T**oyce, after Alan Sugar's secretary Joyce Caley. The machine was designed for secretaries not to replace them. All that would be ousted was the Olympia typewriter which hid the waists of the nations typists. Now they are masked up to the designer spectacles by the VDU of the PCW 8256. Soon they will have to find some cushions to see over the top of the new PCW 9512.

It is amazing just how successful the PCW has been. The reception desk of my local Amiga software house is graced with a PCW; many of the major magazines and newspapers have their text crafted on Amstrads. Even *Popular* relies on a crowd of Joyces to put the words on your page. You'd think that there was not much scope for improvement.

The PCW is two years old (Happy Birthday to you - blow out the candles) at this years PCW show. You don't get Ford sticking with the same Escort for that long and so the boys from Brenthwood (home of Amstrad, just the wrong side of the M25 and too near Southend to pass itself off as civilization) has wheeled out a new model. Unlike Ford the old Joyce stays in production but having seen the development costs amortised the price drops to £299 plus VAT. The new machine is Joyce 3. Deduction reveals the Joyce 2 to be the PCW 8512. A machine which looked like an 8256 but boasted 512K RAM and a second 720K disk drive. This also has had its price pruned, to £399 plus VAT. Logic and a sense of fair play dictating that at £499 plus VAT the PCW 9512 with better bits bolted is a step above that.

Pretty

The PCW 9512 is the prettiest Amstrad machine ever. At first glance it appears to be a PC 1512, the colour is the same. But this is a deception which is laid bare by a three inch disk drive. Then you notice the other differences between the PC case and the new PCW. The monitor does not tilt, but it looks smart with 8512 holes for ventilation. The back of the monitor is better styled, and the top slopes sharply. This means that the printer will no longer fit on top of the machine but it can go either side of the main unit. Many people claim that having the position of the PCW 8256 printer dictated by a short lead was a limitation. The screen is no longer green, white is considered more exclusive. Despite Amstrad's insistence that the screen is paper white the text is white on a black background, not inverted as on a Mac or ZX81.

I am assured that the workings of the keyboard are identical to those on the 8256, which in turn is the same as the 1512. This only goes to show what a different good keycaps make. The PCW 8256 felt cramped, I often hit keys by mistake. On the 9512 things are better spaced, the shift keys in particular are easier to get at. The large area below the spacebar shows some concern about ergonomics. Anyone who is used to an Amstrad PC will feel at home with fingers on Joyce 3, but if you are used to an earlier PCW things get confusing. The functional keys have been moved from the QWERTY section and the numeric pad to the left where they masquerade as PC function keys.

Formidable

The 720K drive has usurped the 180K drive fitted in the elder sister. This means that like the 8256 the 9512 is a single drive machine and like the sibling it can be upgraded with the addition of a second drive but not the same unit. A Joyce 3 with dual drives and high on 1.5 megabytes of disk storage is a formidable machine.

Upwards disk compatibility is maintained, so the 9512 will read 180K disks but cannot write to them, and 720K disks from the 8512 are indistinguishable by their sameness. The disks are Amstrad standard 3inch, no-one else uses these (OK, so the Tatung Einstein uses them but no-one uses a Tatung Einstein, consequently only Amstrad users buy 3inch disks). Suffice to say that Amstrad have built a standard by being bigger, and like the standards IBM establish in the same manner it's not the best but it works. Thanks to the widespread use of Amstrad disks the price has fallen to £299 (only twice the price of an Amiga style 3.5inch disk) from the quite ridiculous £5.

Malcolm Miller and his cronies in the Amstrad marketing department have never been modest about the abilities of the Amstrad machines, so having exhausted the terms 'near letter quality' on the PCW 8256 printer and 'letter quality' on the new LQ 3500 they have been forced to call the daisywheel printer 'perfect letter quality'. Exaggeration apart the 9512 printer is very good, it may not be the much rumoured 24 pin dot matrix mechanism I expected but it is not as slow as the other sub £1000 daisywheels of my acquaintance, at about 20 characters per second. The carriage is very wide, and will easily take a sheet of A4 sideways. Unfortunately the printer is very big, and not really in keeping with the sleek lines of the system unit. The size is essen-

tial for using the 9512 with a spreadsheet. On the 8256 you could condense the type, try that with a daisywheel and you end up with a mess.

Both print wheels and ribbons are freely available. The wheels and codes accepted by the printer conform to Diablo 630 protocols, the daisywheel equivalent of Epson compatible.

Expensive

There are some people who will want a faster printer, graphics as both for them the PCW 9512 offers a centronics parallel port. There is no need for the expensive CPS 8256 interface if you do not want to attach a modem. If you do need a serial port then the interface will hang off the back like an alien thought. The 9512 is more of a typewriter replacement than the other Joyces so it is unlikely that many people will buy CPS's.

There is quite a price difference between the 8512 and 9512 particularly when you realise that the 9512 is the more expensive machine which has fewer disk drives. The price hike is justified by the inclusion of LocoScript 2, the improved wordprocessor from Locomotive Systems in Dorking. LocoScript 2 is sold separately at £20, but the 9512 also comes with LocoSpell and LocoMail. These are sold at £40 each and so the three justify the extra cost of the 9512 in themselves. I'd argue that 'Mail' and 'Spell' have always been disproportionately overpriced.

To drive the new printer and any of the centronics printers you are likely to hang off the back LocoScript 2 has a number of printer drivers. The manual suggests that you will be able to buy printer drivers for additional daisywheels and printers. I'll believe that when I see them on sale. LocoScript 2 offers 448 characters which can be printed on a PCW 8256 dot matrix printer. There is no way you will be able to find another printer or combination of daisywheels which can reproduce them all. You cannot attach an 8256 dot-matrix printer to a 9512, they are very different beasts.

Problems of printer compatibility are one of the reasons why the complete system approach of the PCW works so well. Most people will only use the Amstrad supplied printer and daisywheels with the same basic character set. I'd argue that if you really need to do a lot of printer and typesetting swapping then you have bought the wrong machine. The dot matrix output of the other PCW's is not bad and much more flexible.

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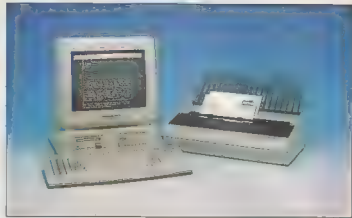
LocoScript is easy to use, you can sit down and quickly produce letters with a little help from the manual. This means that most of the users I've come across learn by doing and so miss out on loads of LocoScript's features. It is worth taking some time to learn about start-of-day disks, which reduce the time it takes to get going when beginning a session. Layouts (despite being very different from LocoScript 1 layouts) simplify the process of getting the page to look right. Blocks and Paste buffers speed up the typing of repetitive documents. If time is money then reading the manual is an investment.

LocoMail and LocoSpell help increase the value of the system. The dictionary for LocoSpell is English, based on Chambers 20th Century Dictionary as used by Scrabble players. Checking is run from inside LocoScript, which speeds up the process, suggestions are offered for incorrectly spell words and the vocabulary can be increased through the addition of user dictionaries. The best reason for upgrading a PCW 8256 was to use the LocoSpell lexicon. The 9512 is already upgraded.

Useful

LocoMail is one of those programs which a few people will find extremely useful and the rest won't touch. Mail merging is complicated. It took me nearly a week to get what I wanted from MailMerge for WordStar. The lessons of time have meant that Locomotive learnt to make LocoMail easier to use than that but it will still take a couple of dry runs to get what you want.

It takes a programmer to stretch LocoMail, there are options to test a data file for things like outstanding balances and then insert different texts ranging from "Thank you for your prompt payment" through "this amount is now outstanding" and up to "Pay up today or we send da Boyz round". You choose the text, but the meaning is the same. Most LocoMail users will probably find the nuances of < > and truth tests too confusing. Programming the software is not my greatest reservation, it is the life of the printer. You could easily store enough on a 720K disk to mail over 3,000 people with customised versions of the same letter. The PCW printer would have to run for days and nights to get through that lot, only stopping for a new ribbon. This kind of hammering is more than a cheap printer should be ex-



pected to take. It is also a very long time to wait for the output. You really do need a faster and more robust printer for this kind of task. There is a tractor unit which removes the difficulty of having a feed on each sheet but no single sheet hopper, a device which would make short mailing runs possible on standard company notepaper.

All Amstrad PCW's are supplied with CP/M+. Being an old operating system there is plenty of good software, and it is amazing how many companies have benefited from transferring forgotten products to 3 inch disks. There has even proved to be a market for rival wordprocessors. Amstrad have scored quite a hit with Protext. This runs perfectly on a 9512, although a modicum of printer installation is advisable.

CP/M+ has the very useful ability to think of one disk drive as both A and B, swapping the definitions while you swap disks. The PCW has a 368K RAM Disk so you could copy files one at a time, but a whole floppy needs the features of CP/M+.

As anyone who bought a Jupiter Ace will tell you, no machine is complete without a BASIC interpreter. The language is ideal for running up the odd text processing program or complete accounts system. The PCW is supplied with a wonderful Basic. Mallard Basic was written by Locomotive software to be better than and compatible with Microsoft Basic. Mallard is fast and has a high level of mathematical precision. But it does not have any graphics of its own. You can use add-on graphics, either in the form of the Amstrad supplied GSX routines - which are a nightmare to use, or Ex-Basic from Nabbits in Liverpool. Being a monochrome machine graphics aren't exactly the PCW's long suit. Neither is the sound, a Spectrum-like beep being the best it can muster. So Mallard is right for the PCW. What is very wrong is the inclusion of Logo, a micky mouse language if ever I saw one.

Anyone who thinks a program which reads

pd			
N 45	is more	DRAW	
100	readable than	100,100,200,200	
pu			

either needs their head examining or is a teacher. Still it looks good in the list of bundled software and the instructions help in the manual.

The manual is large, 624 pages and unlike early PCW manuals is bound like a book. This means it will not lie flat. Perhaps this is another way of generating revenue, because after a few weeks of use with a paperback holding open the key pages so that you can learn how to work headers and footers. The pages make a bid for freedom. Soon the book becomes very loose leaf!

The binding apart Amstrad and Locomotive have really learned from the stick they took over the earlier manual. The new book is far better illustrated with diagrams showing what happens on the screen and which key to press. I suspect that users who upgrade from an 8256 will find the detail of the new manual tedious, but they should spare a thought for new users. We were all learner drivers once.

The PCW 9512 is the best typewriter replacement ever. It is also an OK CP/M+ computer. But if you want a bit of both the 8512 probably represents better value for money. LocoScript 2 is a vast improvement on the original LocoScript, especially when you take into account the inclusion of LocoSpell. Anyone who had reservations about the print quality of the 8256 will now be swayed. After hours there are a host of games, including the best 8 bit version of Starglider. The unanswered question is why no other computer manufacturer has brought out a machine with which to compete.

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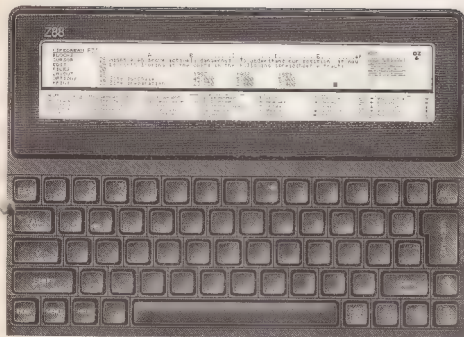
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Amiga BB

Tony Jackson, of Buxley Kent, writes:

Q I intend to open a bulletin board running on my Amiga 1000 and I hope to offer (for a closed membership fee of £5-10) as much public domain software as I can lay my hands on. Unfortunately the membership fee is to cover the cost of importing PD software from the US. To reduce costs, I thought I would offer PD software for other machines, is this possible? I know I can't run it but is it possible to upload and download software with the Amiga?

Also Amiga peripherals are much more expensive in the UK than they are in the US. Could you tell me what it entails in the way of import tax and VAT etc to import both hardware and software?

P.S. How many bytes are there in 1 Mega Byte?

A If you have an ST available then transferring files between the machines is simply a matter of hooking up an RS232 interface, and using a bit of terminal software at either end. As far as I know, you will not be able to read ST disks (or any other disks, beside Amiga, for that matter). What you need is a set protocol, say Xmodem, to make sure all of the files are compatible with other systems that will be accessing the BB. If the PD programs can be obtained in ASCII format then there should be no problems whatsoever in transferring them between machines. You might try hooking up to an ST BB and downloading some software to see how it goes?

AS far as I know you can import anything you like from the US and all you have to pay is VAT and the p&p. This certainly applies if the goods are not for resale. However, I suspect that things may get a little more complex if you want to sell the goods you re importing.

A Mega byte, reputedly 1 million bytes, is actually 1048576 bytes or 2^{20} alternately K is 1k times 1k or 1024 x 1024 i.e. 1048576.

Eye of a needle

Alan S Wolstencroft, of Knutsford, Cheshire, writes:

Q Ref. PCW of 28th August "Tied up with ribbons", I have found, using a Star DP510, that for some ribbons, the eyelets are so flat that they sometimes slip through the toggle so that the tape is run to the end and is scotched and printing stops, in such case the mechanical action can be rendered more positive by careful insertion into each eyelet of a small brass paper clip of the bifurcated variety, suitably shortened with the ends folded in.

Concerning the user maintenance or printers, I find that it is possible to remove all superficial dust but there is little guidance on the removal of dust accumulating in the least accessible places where, one supposes, it could cause real problems. Also I am uncertain as to the correct mode of lubrication, if any, of the round polished steel bar on which the printing head is carried.

Do you think PCW could publish something in the way of guidelines on printer maintenance?

A Thanks for the tip. I use 3in1 (sorry about the ad) oil on the bar in my printer which seems to work admirably. Just drip a little on when it gets too dry or begins to rattle. I suspect that the best thing is to use cotton buds (whups again) soaked in meths to get at the nooks and crannies but, as you say, there are some parts that are pretty well inaccessible without dissecting the printer. The best thing to do is keep the id

shut as much as possible and, if you use it professionally, get a maintenance contract.

Chalk and cheese

Stephen Chance, of Stockwell, London, writes:

Q Re 'Cheese Tasting Session' in Sept 4th issue.

I have only the disk version of Cheese, but hopefully the tape version is similar enough for the following information to be of use.

The bit map, colour RAM, and screen RAM are saved by Cheese as a single program file which loads from \$8000 to \$D000. The file is so large because, with vertical scrolling, Cheese creates a picture about half as big again as the actual hires screen. The main chunk of the bitmap is at \$8000, the screen RAM at \$C200, and the colour RAM at \$C800. Also, the background colour, to be poked into \$D021, is at \$CFFD.

Unfortunately, to get a use-

ful picture out of all of this, everything has to be moved; with the bitmap at \$8000, half of it is obscured from the VIC chip by the character generator ROM image; \$C200 is the midpoint of a text screen rather than the start address of one, and of course the colour RAM has to be relocated to \$D800.

I find that the most convenient solution is to switch to Bank 3 (\$C000 \$FFFF), placing the bitmap at \$E000, and screen RAM at \$CC00. All this takes minutes in Basic, but the following machine code routine will accomplish it in the twinkling of an eye.

To use, load a cheese file into memory i.e. LOAD "ACHE",1 from disk or LOAD ":",1,1 from tape, load and run the program and call SYS 32508. To return to normal call SYS 32571.

Actually, I wrote the program in the hope of a tanner from 'Bytes and Pieces' but you stole my thunder.

A Sorry about that, I'll have a word with the Editor and see what can be done.

continued on page 25

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◀ continued from page 22

Sticky, mouse

John Grimaldi, of Thornton Heath, London, writes:

Q I have had my ST for some months now and have just begun to experience problems with the Mouse. It has started to become very inaccurate, and has a sort of lumpy feel. I have an idea that it may need cleaning but I don't want to take it apart for reasons of warranty. Is this a common problem and how do I solve it?

A Turn the mouse over and you will see a section with two arrows on it. Push the section in the direction indicated and it will come off. Don't worry about it that's what it's meant to do. Remove the ball and give it a wipe.

Next, peep inside and you will see three rollers, one for the x direction, one for the y direction, and one to keep things steady. These rollers should be silvery coloured, if they're not then they need cleaning.

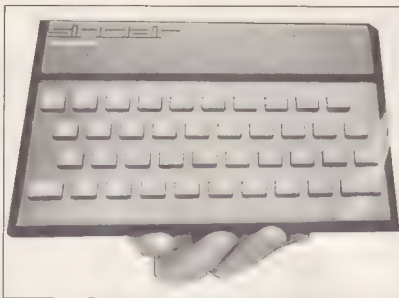
The best way to remove the gunge is to scrape the rollers with a screwdriver or knife until they are gleaming again. Polish up with a bit of methyls or lighter fuel if you like but don't get it on the ball or the plastic bits, because it isn't at all good for them in the longer term. Try not to get too much gunge inside the mouse as this will eventually muck up the whole lot.

If you clean the beastie once a month or so, you shouldn't have too many problems. If the mouse begins to squeak then you have got troubles, the best solution for which is a cage.

Character assassination

Stephen Howlett, of Morriston, Swansea, writes:

Q Is it possible to change the Spectrum's character set? I have designed a new set of numbers and letters using UDGs and I can change the Spectrum's to mine. The trouble is that I



Some would say that the Spectrum's character remains the same whatever you do to it...

can only use 23 UDGs so I hope you can help.

A In the system variables there is a pointer to the character set which normally points to the ROM definitions. Change this to point to RAM and the whole set can be redefined. Locations 23606 (low byte) and 23607 (high byte) hold the address 256 less than the start of the actual definitions. The first 32 characters (0-31) are control codes and therefore do not have shape definitions so, 8*32=256 i.e. the gap before the first character, space (32). Characters are defined on an 8x8 matrix of dots e.g.

```
00000000
00011000
00111000
00011000
00011000
00011000
01111110
01111110
```

Would define the 1 character shape. The following program demonstrates how this can be done from Basic. It copies the character set from Rom to RAM and redefines part of the A definition.

```
10 CLEAR 39999
20 PRINT "AAAAAA"
30 PRINT "CHARS NOW AT"
40 PRINT PEEK(23606),
PEEK(23607)
```

```
PRINT PEEK(23606)+
PEEK(23607)*256
60 FOR T=0 TO 127:8
70 POKE 4000+T PEEK(15616
+T)
80 NEXT T
90 POKE 23607 INT((4000
-256)/256)
100 POKE 23606,4000-256*INT
(4000/256)
110 PRINT "REDEFINE PART
OF A"
120 POKE 39744+(8*65),255
130 PRINT "AAAAAA"
```

RS232

D P Berkley, of York Electronic Research, The Fishergate Centre, 4 Fishergate, Yorks, writes:

Q I am writing in reply to Christopher Adams' letter in the August issue of PCW concerning problems encountered in connecting a ZX-81 to a Brother printer.

The Brother range of printers support both hardware handshaking and X-on Xoff protocol, but unfortunately

these mutually exclusive formats have been implemented in such a way as to prevent communication if the printer is not given a CTS signal, which requires modification to the D connector wiring, in order to overcome this problem the following connections should be made: Pin 2 TX printer -> controller Pin 3 RX controller -> printer Pin 7 OV i.e. ground Pin 20 RTS o/p low when printer is busy pins 4, 5, 6, 8 should be connected together.

Y.E.R. will provide a cable specially wired for Brother printers with our Commodore C64/C128/Plus 4 RS232 interface for no extra cost. If any readers have difficulty in interfacing Commodore computers to Brother RS232 printers we would be happy to discuss technical problems. Phone 0904 610722.

A Ta.

Is there anything about your computer you don't understand, and which everyone else seems to take for granted? Whatever your problem Peek it to Kenn Garroch and every week he will Poke back as many answers as he can. The address is Peek & Poke, PCW, 3rd Floor, Greencoat House, Francis Street, London SW1P 1DG.

Last week I mentioned that it is possible to use a sound chip to synthesize real sounds using amplitude modulation, changing the value in the volume register according to the waveform to be produced. The sounds produced were defined using sine synthesis ie combinations of sine waves. Wave forms can also be defined from programming, some by using sampling devices known as ADCs (Analogue to Digital Converters). An ADC measures the amplitude or volume of a waveform at specific intervals returns the values as binary numbers on a data bus. These can be read into the computer and used with the sound chip or a DAC (Digital to Analogue Converter) to reproduce them. Sampled sounds can also be modified with computer programs to produce filters, echos, frequency changes etc. The crucial factor about ADCs is the speed at which they can convert the incoming waveform. For example, take a sine wave of 440Hz, if its amplitude was measured every second,

0-15 so the signal must be reduced 16 times to output it via this method. This reduces the quality but an eight bit DAC will reproduce the sound, more or less, at the quality at which it was sampled.

An eight bit DAC simply converts values from 0-255 into voltages with the same increment, ie if the output is to vary between 0 and 5V then the DAC will split this into 256 steps or units of 0.02V.

There are a number of commercial ADC/DAC units available for home micros, generally used for speech synthesis. They can record sounds which are stored in memory, and then reproduce them in normal or modified form (see ST Update September-November 1987 for a circuit that is easily adapted to any micro with an I/O port).

ADC/DAC systems are used along with special speech chips because of the amount of information contained in the spoken word. A speech synthesis chip normally uses phonemes, or parts of word sounds, to create its vocabulary. All words

having each word available in memory because they take up so much less space. Consider a sampled word that lasts half a second sampling at 40kHz into eight bits produces 20000 bytes, quite a lot of memory even by today's standards.

Storing phonemes themselves takes up a lot of space: the thing is that the data is held in ROM is a special chip that includes the DAC and all of the gear necessary to reproduce the sound. All the programmer has to do is select the required sequence of phonemes to produce the desired word. Most words will split into less than 5 or 10 phonemes so the computer is not handling very much data.

The main drawback with speech synthesis chips is that they tend to be rather robotic and usually have American accents - the BBC micro speech chip is an exception in that it uses a British news reader as its basis. The main problem with phonemes is that they don't convert from text to sound, as spelling is inconsistent.

The last waltz

In the fourth and last part of his series on computer sound, Kenn Garroch looks at analogue to digital converters and speech.

the resulting set of numbers would be meaningless. Taking samples every 2.3ms ie 440 times a second is better but they will not look or sound like a sine wave.

To gain the best result, the sampling frequency must be at least twice the frequency being sampled eg 440Hz needs to be sampled at at least 880Hz or every 1.1ms to produce a result that at least represents the correct frequency on playback, ideally, higher sampling frequencies than this are desirable, and when using ADCs to sample sounds that can be heard ie in the range 20-20kHz, they must do a conversion at least once every 25us. This should cover all the audible frequencies but will cause most computers and ADCs some problems. There are, however, ADCs that will operate at these frequencies and reproduce as respectable result.

Translating the sounds back from numerical to audible form can be done either with a sound chip as described before, or with a DAC which will produce a far superior result. Since eight bits is a convenient number format for computers, most ADCs quantify the amplitude of a sampled signal into values from 0-255 which can be read directly into a computer user port and stored quite conveniently in memory. Most sound chips only allow volume values from

can be broken down into sections, each of which is a distinctive sound, and can be recombined in different ways to produce reasonably intelligible speech. These phonemes (or more accurately, allophones) are much more suited to speech synthesis than

```
100 REM SYS 32500 TO VITEM CHEESE FILE
110 REM SYS 32571 TO VITEM TEXT
120 POKE 95-251 POKE 96-126 CLR
130 A=32500 B=200
140 FORZ=0 TO 1 C=B FORY=0 TO 11
150 READU,C,C+0 IN 0,255 THEN POKED
160 AHHH: NEXT
170 READU,(FC,C,B THEN COSUB190
180 B=B+10: NEXT END
190 PRINT"ERROP LINE" RETURN
200 DATA 32,3,127,32,105,127,32,155,127,32,285,127,1110
210 DATA 96,173,2,221,9,3,141,2,221,173,17,209,1266
220 DATA 9,30,141,17,209,173,0,221,41,252,141,0,1255
230 DATA 221,173,22,209,9,16,141,22,209,169,56,141,1366
240 DATA 24,209,173,33,209,141,255,127,173,253,207,141,1943
250 DATA 33,209,96,173,2,221,9,3,141,2,221,173,1282
260 DATA 17,209,41,223,141,17,209,173,0,221,41,252,1542
270 DATA 9,3,141,0,221,173,22,209,41,239,141,22,1625
280 DATA 209,169,2,141,24,209,173,255,127,141,33,209,1709
290 DATA 36,169,0,133,251,169,129,183,252,169,0,135,1633
300 DATA 253,169,224,133,254,169,0,177,251,145,253,155,2164
310 DATA 253,201,63,206,7,165,254,201,255,209,1,96,1912
320 DATA 230,201,209,2,230,252,230,253,209,2,230,254,2306
330 DATA 76,153,127,169,0,133,251,169,194,133,252,163,1796
340 DATA 9,133,253,169,204,133,254,159,0,177,251,145,1879
350 DATA 253,165,253,201,252,208,7,165,254,201,207,208,2354
360 DATA 1,96,230,251,208,2,230,252,230,253,203,2,1963
370 DATA 230,254,76,173,127,169,0,133,251,169,200,133,1915
380 DATA 252,169,0,133,253,169,216,133,254,160,0,177,1916
390 DATA 251,145,253,165,253,201,255,208,7,165,254,201,2358
400 DATA 219,209,1,96,230,251,208,2,230,252,230,253,2109
410 DATA 208,2,230,234,76,223,127,234,95,256,256,256,2297
```

All in all, there is a lot that can be done with sounds and computers. It is difficult to cover it all in a few articles. Any detailed description has to be machine specific since there is no standardisation I have tried to give an overall view.

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Newsmaker

Simon T Goodwin

Desktop publishing involves the design, manipulation and printing of a page of text and graphics. Posters, adverts or newsletters can be produced with ease and stored for future use. The computer stores the page in memory (one page takes 51K) and the user can work on one third of the page at any one time. Switching between the three parts of the page is quick and easy.

To get the program up and running you must type in two programs. Program I is Basic, while Program II is a machine code listing. Run Program II first. This pokes in the machine code data. If errors are found a message will be displayed. If the data has been typed in correctly a file "paper bin" will be saved onto the disc. Program II can then be deleted. Running Program I loads the machine code and enters the main program. Remember this program is 8128 only it may run on an expanded 464/664 but the commands prefixed by a " " may need to be altered.

Newsmaker is menu driven throughout. To move the pointer use the cursor keys. The Copy keys select an option from the menu. Pressing the Esc key returns to the main menu. The main menu headings are Text, Graphics, Banner, Files, Print and Miscellaneous and are displayed at the top of the screen.

Text

Upon selecting this option you are greeted with three options: Load File, Enter Text and Exit. (An exit option is included on all sub-menus. Selecting it returns to the main menu.) The Load File option can be used on word-processor files (Protext Program files and Mini Office II files work) or ordinary ASCII files. Move the cursor to the position you want the text to appear at and press Copy. Then type the name of the program. If you

load text into a shape (say as triangle) it will fill it. Whenever the program runs out of space it displays an overflow menu. Then you can either return to the menu or chose another position to start printing more text. The Enter Text option lets you type text directly on screen. The Cursor keys and the Delete key can be used to move the cursor. Pressing Ctr returns to the main menu.

Graphics

This is perhaps the most rewarding way of using this program. A number of options are available: Dot mode, Line mode, Fill, Spray, Cut and Paste. The Dot and Spray modes can be used to write or erase (type E or W when the menu appears). Pressing Copy produces either a dot or a spray pattern depending on which option you use. Line mode surprisingly enough allows lines to be drawn. Use cursors and Copy to set the location of one end of the line, then do the same for the other end of the line. To use the Fill option you must already have moved the cursor to the required position. Be careful here as one false move can ruin your designs. The Cut and Paste options allow you to move chunks of graphics and text from one screen location to another. To Cut you must set the position, width and depth of the area to be cut using the Cursors and Copy. The Paste option allows you to display the graphics you have cut anywhere on the screen. You must set the position to paste, again using Cursors and Copy. You can even move text from one of the three screens to another.

As this is a three week listing, more instructions are given next week. Also, if you'd like a copy of Newsmaker on disc then send £7.00 to 41 Fountains Drive, Acklam, Middlesbrough, Cleveland TS5 7LW.

```
10 REM *****
20 REM *** NEWSMAKER Program I ***
30 REM *** ST Goodwin August 1987 ***
40 REM *****
50 REM
60 ON ERROR GOTO 4720
65 ON BREAK GOSUB 4730
80 SYMBOL AFTER 32
90 MEMORY 37999
100 MODE 2
110 LOAD "paper":CALL 38000
120 :BANK,5:MOVE,49152,16384,16384:BANK,0
130 :BANK,6:MOVE,49152,16384,16384:BANK,0
140 :BANK,7:MOVE,49152,16384,16384:BANK,0
150 :BANK,0
160 MODE 2:PAPER 0:PEN 1: BORDER 13:INK 0,26:INK 1,0
170 :
180 :
190 DEFINT a-z:DIM b(12),c(180,2):FOR a=0 TO 6:b(b*(a+2)+16-a):NEXT
200 storex=100:storey=100:dense=5:scrm=1
210 z=20000:pas=25000
220 :
230 :
240 WHILE 1
250 error=0
260 PEN 1
270 RESTORE 4650
280 LOCATE 1,1:PRINT SPACE(180)
290 LOCATE 1,2:PRINT SPACE(180)
300 TAG:FOR n=30 TO 600 STEP 96:MOVE n,3
310 READ a$:PRINT a$:NEXT:TAGOFF
320 PLOT -5,-5,1
330 PLOT 3,368:DRAW 632,0:DRAW 0,28:DRAW -632,0:DRAW 0,-28
340 a2=0:MENU,0,1,1,0,0,28,390,a2
```

```
340 ON aX GOSUB 390,1380,2430,2740,3460,3960
350 MENU
360 END
370 :
380 :
390 :CUT,49152+160,z,20,100
400 :FWINDOW,55457,13,90,0
410 PLOT 10,360:GOSUB 4590
420 RESTORE 4660:UPRINT,20,346,"Text"
430 TAG:FOR n=1 TO 3:READ a$:MOVE 20,330:PRINT a$:NEXT:TAGOFF
440 a2=0:MENU,3,0,0,1,1,20,314,a2
450 :PASTE,49152+160,z,20,100
460 IF a2=2 THEN GOSUB 520
470 IF a2=1 THEN GOSUB 740
480 IF a2=3 THEN RETURN
490 RETURN
500 :
510 :
```

```
520 GOSUB 1070
530 r$=1:GOSUB 2680:r$=r$+1:FOR n=1 TO 255:CALL 8818:NEXT
540 a$=1:stx=1:sty=1:LOCATE x,y:CALL 888B1
550 WHILE 1
560 a$=INKEY$
570 IF a$=CHR$(127) THEN GOSUB 690:GOTO 600
580 IF x=80 AND y=25 THEN a$=""
590 IF a$="" THEN IF ASC(a$)=240 THEN LOCATE x,y:PRINT a$:x=x+1
600 IF x=80 AND y=25 THEN c$(x,y)=chr$(a$):y=y+1
610 IF a$=CHR$(13) AND y=25 THEN c$(x,y)=chr$(a$):y=y+1:LOCATE x,y
620 IF a$=CHR$(240) AND y=sty THEN PRINT CHR$(11):y=y-1
```


PROGRAMMING: AMSTRAD CPC

```

630 IF a#CHR$(1241) AND y<25 THEN PRINT
CHR$(10);y=y+1
640 IF a#CHR$(1242) THEN GOSUB 1000
650 IF a#CHR$(1243) AND x#0 THEN PRINT
CHR$(9);x=x+1:IF x#80 AND y<25 THEN x=
x-80:y=y+1:LOCATE x,y
660 IF m#50 THEN CALL 86604:RETURN
670 IF a#CHR$(1610) THEN CALL 86604:RETU
RN
680
690
700 IF x#tx AND y#ty THEN RETURN
700 PRINT CHR$(8); "q";CHR$(8);IF x#tx
THEN x=cint(int(x+1,1)-1)+y*cint(int(x+1,2)+int(m)-1
:LOCATE x,y:PRINT CHR$(1610);CHR$(8);ELSE
x=x-1
710 LOCATE x,y:RETURN
720 :
730 :
740 ex=0:GOSUB 1030:ex=1:GOSUB 2660:ex=0
750 tx=0:ty=0:LOCATE tx,ty
760 x2=(x#81-8)*2=(125-y#81)+161stx=x2
770 :CUT,49152+160,2,42,60:FWINDOW,5545
7,40,50,0:MOVE 10,360:GOSUB 4600
780 FWINDOW 4,40,4,8:FOR n=1 TO 255:CALL
86818:NEXT
790 INPUT "Filename ",f$
800 IF f$="" OR LEN(f$)#8 THEN 790
810 :PASTE,49152+160,2,47,60:WINDOW 1,80
1,1,25
820 mkr=0:OPENIN(f$)
830 WHILE NOT(EOF)
840 LINE INPUT m$,a$()
850 FOR n=1 TO LEN(a$)+1
860 IF ASC(MID$(a$(n),1,1))=m THEN PRINT
CHR$(17);x=tx+y+1;x2=stx+1:LOCATE x,y
870 IF d#1 THEN GOSUB 1140:ELSE IF y
<26 THEN PRINT:GOTO 910
880 LOCATE x,y:PRINT MID$(a$(n),1,1)
890 x=x+1:x2=x2+8
900 IF x#81 THEN x=tx+y+1:x2=stx+y+1:
-16:GOSUB 1330:IF d#1 THEN GOSUB 1140:EL
SE IF y<26 THEN PRINT:GOTO 910
910 IF y<26 THEN PRINT:GOTO 910
920 IF ex#1 THEN GOTO 970
930 NEXT:tx=tx+y+1:x2=stx+y+1:-16:GOSUB
1330:IF d#1 THEN GOSUB 1140
940 IF y<26 THEN PRINT:ELSE GOSUB 1140
950
960
970
980 :
990 :
1000 IF x#tx THEN PRINT CHR$(8);x=x+1:
RETURN
1010 IF x#tx AND y#ty THEN x=79:y=y+1:
LOCATE x,y:RETURN
1020 RETURN

1030 FOR n=1 TO 255:CALL 86818:NEXT:GOSU
B 2340
1040 WINDOW 1,80,1,25
1050 LOCATE 15,5:PRINT "MOVE CURSOR AND
PRESS COPY TO"
1060 LOCATE 15,6:PRINT "LOCATE TEXT."
1070 LOCATE 15,8:PRINT "Press a key"
1080 WHILE INKEY#"";NEXT
1090 :PASTE,49152+160+13,2,40,100
1100 x=storex:y=storey:GOSUB 4370:storex
=x:storey=y
1110 RETURN
1120 :
1130 :
1140 :CUT,55457,2,42,60
1150 :FWINDOW,55457,40,56,0:MOVE 10,360:
GOSUB 4600:WINDOW 4,40,4,8
1160 ex=0
1170 INPUT "Do you want to (E)xit or (S)
end the rest or the rest to another pla
ce " :es
1180 es=1:OVER(es)
1190 IF es="e" THEN ex=1:CLOSEIN:WINDOW
1,80,1,25: PASTE,55457,2,42,60:RETURN
1200 IF es="s" THEN 1170
1210 :PASTE,55457,2,42,60
1220 GOSUB 1030
1230 tx=1:GOSUB 2660:tx=0
1240 tx=0:ty=0:LOCATE tx,ty
1250 mkr=0
1260 y2=(y#81-8)*2=(125-y#81)+161stx=x2
1270 RETURN
1280 :
1290 :
1300 d=0:FOR i=1 TO 10 :x=0
1310 IF i#15:FOR j=2 TO 10 :y=0:IF i#15:
1320 NEXT:RETURN
1330 d=0:FOR i=1 TO 10 :x=0
1340 IF i#15:FOR j=2 TO 10 :y=0:IF i#15:
1350 NEXT:RETURN
1360 :
1370 :
1380 :CUT,49152+160+13,2,20,100
1390 :FWINDOW,55469,13,90,0
1400 PLOT 105,360:GOSUB 4590
1410 RESTORE 4670:UPPRINT,120,340,"Graph
ics"
1420 TAB:FOR n=1 TO 7:READ a$:MOVE 120,3
30:-int(161):PRINT a$:NEXT:TABOFF
1430 a$=0:(MENU,7,0,0,1,1,120,316,8a2
1440 :PASTE,49152+160+13,2,20,100
1450 ON a$ GOSUB 1490,1630,1730,1770,187
0,2130,2310
1460 RETURN
1470 :
1480 :
1490 GOSUB 2340:INPUT "W)rite or (E)ras
e":es=1:OVER(es)
1500 IF es="w" THEN pen=1:GOSUB 2400:EL
SE IF es="e" THEN pen=0:GOSUB 2400:EL
SE pen=700:GOTO 1490

```

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PROGRAMMING: AMSTRAD CPC

◀ continued from page 29

```

600 DATA 00,56,05,00,4E,00,00,46,366
610 DATA 02,C5,E5,1A,77,23,13,10,283
620 DATA FA,E1,01,00,08,07,30,04,221
630 DATA 01,50,C0,09,C1,00,20,E9,2F1
640 DATA C9,00,6E,02,00,66,03,00,439
650 DATA 5E,04,0D,56,05,C0,3E,CB,36C
660 DATA 1D,C0,1B,C8,1B,0C,C9,0D,380
670 DATA 6E,02,0D,66,04,20,25,C0,206
680 DATA 1A,6C,0D,3E,30,0D,56,01,345
690 DATA 7D,12,13,7E,12,C9,C5,E5,3A3
700 DATA 3A,03,95,77,23,13,10,FB,297
710 DATA E1,01,00,08,09,30,04,01,128
720 DATA 50,C1,09,C1,00,20,E7,C9,397
730 DATA C0,58,96,0D,5E,04,0D,56,42D
740 DATA 05,0D,6E,02,00,66,03,C0,385
750 DATA 53,E4,94,22,E6,94,C0,4F4
760 DATA B8,3A,E8,94,47,3D,2A,E9,4AB
770 DATA 94,C0,83,96,2A,E6,94,06,454
780 DATA 10,2B,10,FD,ED,5B,E4,94,40B
790 DATA C0,C0,B8,21,00,00,11,0B,262
800 DATA 00,3A,E8,94,47,19,10,FD,323
810 DATA EB,21,00,00,C0,F9,B8,C9,456
820 DATA 0B,6E,0D,00,66,01,7E,32,33F
830 DATA E8,94,23,7E,32,E9,94,23,3EF
840 DATA 7E,32,E4,94,C9,C0,58,96,482
850 DATA 3E,17,C0,5A,68,3E,00,C0,345
860 DATA 5A,6B,0E,3E,3A,00,50,5E,1A5
870 DATA 0B,6E,02,0D,66,03,ED,53,763
880 DATA E4,94,22,ED,94,C0,C0,E8,59C
890 DATA 3A,E6,94,47,0D,3A,E9,94,481
900 DATA C0,83,96,2A,E6,94,2B,2B,430
910 DATA ED,5B,E4,94,C0,C0,B8,3A,542
920 DATA EB,94,47,0B,2A,E9,94,2D,514
930 DATA 83,96,C9,3E,C0,5A,6B,437
940 DATA 0B,7E,00,C0,5A,6B,0D,23,43B
950 DATA 10,F1,C9,0D,3E,0A,0D,56,456
960 DATA 01,1A,47,13,1A,6F,13,1A,12B
970 DATA 67,13,7E,C5,E5,C0,0C,95,4E7
980 DATA E1,C1,23,1A,F5,C9,0D,95,305
990 DATA B8,11,EB,94,00,0B,C0,00,32C
1000 DATA B7,1E,F5,C0,09,8F,F1,12,48E
1010 DATA 23,13,10,F2,0E,0B,21,EB,252

```

```

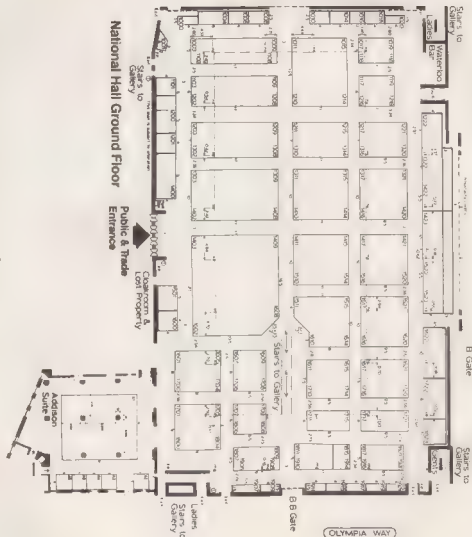
1020 DATA 94,11,F3,94,7E,11,13,12,2E1
1030 DATA 13,23,10,F4,3E,FE,21,F3,36E
1040 DATA 94,ED,6B,8B,3E,FF,21,FB,51E
1050 DATA 94,C0,4B,8B,3E,FE,C0,5A,527
1060 DATA B8,3E,0A,C0,5A,6B,3E,0B,32B
1070 DATA C0,5A,6B,3E,FF,C0,5A,6B,501
1080 DATA 3E,0B,C0,5A,6B,C9,3E,01,333
1090 DATA 32,0C,95,3E,00,32,0D,95,1E5
1100 DATA 3E,17,C0,5A,6B,3E,01,ED,343
1110 DATA 5A,6B,C0,5A,6B,0D,7E,0E,4E0
1120 DATA 32,0E,95,0D,7E,0C,32,6D,276
1130 DATA 95,6B,7E,0A,32,09,95,0D,3A7
1140 DATA 7E,0B,32,0A,95,0D,7E,0B,268
1150 DATA 32,0B,95,0B,5E,04,0D,56,344
1160 DATA 05,0B,6E,02,0D,66,03,ED,385
1170 DATA 53,04,95,22,0B,94,C0,8A,8FC
1180 DATA 9B,C0,9B,97,3A,0D,95,FE,46E
1190 DATA 00,20,07,3E,42,C0,1E,B9,240
1200 DATA 2B,EF,C0,3A,9B,3E,17,C0,424
1210 DATA 5A,6B,3E,0A,C0,5A,6B,C9,3FE
1220 DATA 3A,0B,95,FE,00,2B,07,3E,282
1230 DATA 0B,C0,1E,8B,20,75,3A,09,286
1240 DATA 95,FE,00,2B,07,3E,01,C0,2CE
1250 DATA 1E,8B,20,41,3A,0A,95,FE,311
1260 DATA 00,2B,07,3E,00,C0,1E,8B,213
1270 DATA 20,7C,3A,0B,95,FE,00,2B,29C
1280 DATA 0B,3E,02,C0,1E,8B,C2,60,310
1290 DATA 9E,7F,0C,0F,1F,BB,20,01,7A6
1300 DATA C9,0D,0E,00,0A,6B,01,3A,372
1310 DATA 0C,95,77,32,0D,95,C9,0B,28B
1320 DATA 50,C5,0B,FF,10,FE,C1,10,379
1330 DATA FB,C0,19,8D,C9,3A,6E,95,441
1340 DATA 47,3A,0C,95,2B,C0,C0,E7,450
1350 DATA 97,C0,8B,9B,ED,5B,04,95,463
1360 DATA 21,00,00,AF,19,22,04,95,204
1370 DATA C0,8B,9B,3A,0C,95,3C,32,334
1380 DATA 0C,95,C9,3A,0C,95,FE,01,344
1390 DATA C8,C0,E7,97,C0,8B,9B,2A,52B
1400 DATA 04,95,11,60,00,AF,ED,5E,2FB
1410 DATA 22,04,95,C0,6B,9B,3A,0C,2EC
1420 DATA 95,3D,32,0C,95,C9,3A,0C,2B4
1430 DATA 95,FE,01,C8,C0,E7,97,C0,574

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```

1440 DATA B8,9B,2A,0E,95,11,10,00,204
1450 DATA AF,19,22,0B,95,C8,6B,9B,370
1460 DATA 3A,0C,95,3D,32,0C,95,C9,2B4
1470 DATA 3A,0E,95,47,3A,0C,95,BB,2B7
1480 DATA C8,C0,E7,47,C0,8B,9B,2A,52B
1490 DATA 6B,95,11,10,00,AF,ED,5E,2A4
1500 DATA 22,0B,95,C0,6B,9B,3A,0C,2EE
1510 DATA 95,3C,32,0C,95,C9,ED,5B,3B5
1520 DATA 04,95,2A,0B,95,C0,6B,3A6
1530 DATA 3E,05,C0,5A,6B,3E,8F,C0,36F
1540 DATA 5A,6B,3E,05,C0,5A,6B,3E,37B
1550 DATA 8F,C0,5A,6B,3E,05,C0,5A,30B
1560 DATA B8,3E,3F,C0,5A,6B,3E,05,3A0
1570 DATA C0,5A,6B,3E,8F,C0,5A,6B,491
1580 DATA 7F,05,C0,5A,6B,3E,8F,C0,8AF
1590 DATA 5A,6B,3E,05,C0,5A,6B,3E,37B
1600 DATA 8F,C0,5A,6B,3E,05,C0,5A,30B
1610 DATA 8B,3E,8F,C0,5A,6B,3E,05,3A0
1620 DATA C0,5A,6B,3E,8F,C0,5A,6B,491
1630 DATA 3E,05,C0,5A,6B,3E,8F,C0,38F
1640 DATA 5A,6B,3E,05,C0,5A,6B,3E,37B
1650 DATA 8F,C0,5A,6B,C9,0D,7E,0A,495
1660 DATA C0,5B,0D,C9,6B,6E,0A,0B,40A
1670 DATA 6B,05,0D,5B,0B,3E,02,0E
1680 DATA 00,4B,01,0B,0E,0A,0B,60,1
1690 DATA C9,0D,6E,0A,0B,6B,0E,7A6
1700 DATA 32,3B,97,23,5E,11,3A,EE,0A4
1710 DATA 22,5B,99,00,0C,0A,0B,6B,3A4
1720 DATA 01,22,5B,99,3A,3A,99,47,28D
1730 DATA 2A,3B,97,11,FB,07,C0,77,372
1740 DATA BC,0E,43,99,2B,5B,99,C0,45B
1750 DATA B3,8C,0E,43,99,C0,7A,6B,4F6
1760 DATA C9,21,5F,99,0B,C0,52,312
1770 DATA 99,C9,7E,C0,5A,6B,33,10,3F5
1780 DATA F9,C9,00,00,00,00,52,214
1790 DATA 45,41,44,20,45,52,52,4F,222
1800 DATA 52,2E,00,00,00,00,00,00,80
1810 DATA 00,00,00,00,00,00,00,00,0
1820 REM
1830 REM Once pager.bin is saved
1840 REM delete this program.

```



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National Hall Level 1



Blackwolf

J Myatt

Part two of Blackwolf is presented this week. To complete the game you must make it to the door marked IN, while collecting a series of keys for the locked doors, a gun to shoot the ants, an axe for opening a pair of trees, and avoiding the giant ants, the rolling barrels, and the two types of gun posts.

```

700 IF X1<2X1=16:PROCC:PROCLEFT1:60T0960
710 IF Y1<24Y1=3:PROCC:PROCBACK1:60T0730
720 60T0650
730 Q=1:PROCMW1:Q=19:PROCMW1:Q=25:PR
OCMAL
740 P=4:Q=1:PROCH2:P=13:Q=2:PROCR1:FORQ
=3 TO 6:PROCR2:NEXTQ:PROCR3:P=2:Q=6:PRO
CT:P=4:Q=7:PROCT:P=15:Q=4:PROCH2:P=11:Q=
6:PROCT
750 IF K4X=0:COLOUR128:COLOUR7:VDU31,12,
8:VDU212
760 PROCRE:BE1=0
770 PROC
780 IF K4X=0:IF X1=1 AND Y1=8:PROCT:N6=X4Z
=1
790 IF X1<5 AND BE1=0:STX=1
800 IF Y1<10:IF STZ=0:PROGANT
810 STZ=0
820 IF X1<16X1=2:PROCC:PROCR1GHT1:60T020
0
830 IF Y1<3Y1=24:PROCC:PROCFRONT1:60T05
90
840 IF X1<2X1=16:PROCC:PROCLEFT1:60T0680
850 IF X1<6:IF Y1<30RY1=6:O1=470:P1=650:P
ROCL
860 IF X1<11:IF Y1<20RY1=3:O1=350:P1=945:
PROCL
870 O2=0:60T0770
880 Q=11:PROCMW2:Q=18:PROCMW2:Q=25:PR
OCMAL
890 P=2:Q=2:PROCH:P=13:FORQ=1 TO 6:PRO
CR2:NEXTQ:PROCR3:P=5:Q=7:PROCT:P=1:Q=6:P
ROCT
900 PROCRE
910 PROC
920 IF X1<16X1=2:PROCC:PROCR1GHT1:60T073
0
930 IF X1<2:PROCC:X1=16:PROCLEFT1:60T022
70
940 IF Y1<3:PROCC:Y1=24:PROCFRONT1:60T096

```

```

0
950 60T0910
960 P=13:Q=18:PROCR1:FORQ=1 TO 25:PRO
CR2:NEXTQ
970 Q=4:PROCMW1:Q=10:PROCMW1:P=3:Q=24
:PROCT
980 P=4:Q=19:PROCH:P=2:Q=19:PROCT
990 IF D9X=0:P=5:Q=13:COLOUR130:PROCDIV
1000 P=14:Q=12:PROCH
1010 P=4:Q=11:PROCH:N=1085:FORM=478 TO
600STEP32:PROCR1V1:NEXTN
1020 PROCRE:J1X=20:STX=0:BE1=0
1030 PROC
1040 IF X1<1:IF D9X=0:IF X1<6 AND Y1<10:PRO
TING:O1X=1:VDU4:COLOUR128:FOR1=14 TO 18
:VDU31,5,1:VDU32:NEXT1
1050 IF Y1<24Y1=3:PROCC:PROCBACK1:60T0880
1060 IF X1<2:X1=16:PROCC:PROCLEFT1:60T021
60
1070 IF X1<16:PROCC:X1=2:PROCR1GHT1:60T05
90
1080 IF X1<5 AND BE1=0:STX=1
1090 IF Y1<9:IF STZ=0:PROGANT
1100 IF Y1<7:PROCBAR
1110 O2=0:60T01030
1120 Q=11:PROCMW2:Q=18:PROCMW1:Q=25:PR
OCMAL:P=1:P=4:Q=1:VDU4:COLOUR128:NEXTQ:PRO
CR3:P=5:Q=2:PROCH2:P=14:Q=5:PROCH2:P=15:
Q=1:PROCH:P=16:Q=6:PROCT:P=15:Q=19:PROCH
2
1130 P=6:Q=13:PROCT
1140 PROCRE
1150 PROC
1160 IF X1<7:IF Y1<60RY1=7:O1=420:P1=815:P
ROCL
1170 IF X1<12:IF Y1<30RY1=4:O1=320:P1=910:P
ROCL
1180 IF X1<2X1=16:PROCC:PROCLEFT1:60T0660
1190 IF Y1<3Y1=24:PROCC:PROCFRONT1:60T012
20
1200 IF X1<16:PROCC:X1=2:PROCR1GHT1:60T013
60
1210 60T01150
1220 IF D2X=0:COLOUR128:P=3:Q=14:PROCDIV
1230 P=1:Q=20:PROCR1:FORQ=21 TO 25:PRO
CR2:NEXTQ:Q=4:PROCMW1:Q=10:PROCMW1:P=2:
Q=12:PROCH
1240 P=5:PROCT:P=15:Q=25:PROCT:P=13:Q=22
:PROCT:P=1:Q=19:PROCH2
1250 P=15:Q=13:PROCH:P=9:Q=12:PROCT:P=13
:Q=14:PROCT:P=14:Q=17:PROCT
1260 PROCRE:BE1=0
1270 PROC
1280 IF Y1<7:IF Y1<200RY1=21:O1=530:P1=370
:PROCL
1290 IF X1<5 AND BE1=0:STX=1
1300 IF Y1<9:IF STZ=0:PROGANT

```

```

1310 IF Y1<24Y1=3:PROCC:PROCBACK1:60T0112
0
1320 IF X1<2X1=16:PROCC:PROCLEFT1:60T0310
1330 IF D2X=0:IF X1<4:IF X1<1:PROCTING:O2X
=1:VDU4:COLOUR128:FOR1=15 TO 19:VDU31,3
,1:VDU32:NEXT1
1340 IF X1<16X1=2:PROCC:PROCR1GHT1:60T014
60
1350 STX=0:60T01270
1360 P=11:Q=16:PROCR1:P=13:PROCR1:FORQ=17
TO 24:P=1:PROCR2:P=13:PROCR2:NEXTQ:PRO
CR3:P=1:PROCR3:Q=11:PROCMW1
1370 IF D6X=0:COLOUR130:Q=18:PROCDIV
1380 P=7:Q=22:PROCT:P=11:PROCT:P=9:Q=25:
PROCT:P=15:Q=12:PROCH2
1390 IF K7X=0:COLOUR128:COLOUR1:VDU31,9,2
3:VDU212
1400 PROCRE
1410 PROC
1420 IF X1<2X1=16:PROCC:PROCLEFT1:60T0112
0
1430 IF K6Z=1:IF D6X=0:IF Y1<17:PROCTING:Q=
18:PROCDIV:O2X=1
1440 IF K7X=0:IF Y1<23:PROCTING:X1=1
1450 60T01410
1460 Q=4:PROCMW2:Q=10:PROCMW1:P=15:Q=5
:PROCH2:P=1:Q=13:PROCR1:FORQ=14 TO 23:P
ROCR2:NEXTQ:PROCR3:P=13:Q=13:PROCR3:P=16:
Q=12:PROCT
1470 IF D6X=0:COLOUR130:Q=14:PROCDIV
1480 IF K9X=0:COLOUR128:COLOUR2:VDU31,8,2
1:VDU212
1490 P=13:Q=17:PROCR1:FORQ=18 TO 23:PRO
CR2:NEXTQ:PROCR3:P=8:Q=22:PROCH:P=11:Q=2
4:PROCT
1500 IF K1X=0:VDU31,15,12:COLOUR1:VDU212
1510 PROCRE
1520 PROC
1530 IF X1<7:IF Y1<60RY1=7:O1=530:P1=820:P
ROCL
1540 IF D6X=0:IF D6X=1:IF X1<15:PROCTING:Q=
14:PROCDIV:O2X=1
1550 IF K9X=0:IF X1<7 AND Y1<21:PROCTING:X1=9
1
1560 IF X1<2X1=16:PROCC:PROCLEFT1:60T0122
0
1570 IF X1<6:IF X1<14:IF Y1<12:PROCTING:X1
=1
1580 IF Y1<3Y1=24:PROCC:PROCFRONT1:60T01
580
1590 60T01520
1600 P=4:Q=22:PROCH:Q=11:PROCH:P=15:Q=22
:PROCH:Q=11:PROCH:P=5:Q=18:PROCH2:P=15:Q
=15:PROCH2
1610 FORM=350 TO 600STEP32:N=330:PROCR1
V1:N=840:PROCR1V1:NEXTN

```

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PROGRAMMING: BBC

```

1620IFD33:=0:F=17:G=3:COLOUR129:PROCGOV
1630W=4:PROCMAL1:Q=10:PROCMAL2:F=2:Q=6:
PROCT:F=KXZ:V=COLOUR128:VDUJ31,4,7:VDUJ212
1640PROCDE:JX=11
1650PROCIM
1660IFX2=1:1:IFY2=190RY2=20:OX=32:P3=59
5:PROCL
1670IFX2?7:IFY2=16RY2=17:OX=420:P4=495
:PROCL
1680IFK3X=1:IFX=15:IFD3X=0:PROCTING=5
9:COLOUR128:FORT=5 TO 7:VDUJ31,17,7:VDU
32:NEXTI:D3X=1
1690IFY1?24:PROCC:Y2=3:PROCBACQ:1:GOTO31
0
1700IFX?16:X2=2:PROCC:PROCBHFI:GOTO1
860
1710IFK2X=0:IFX2=5:VDU44:COLOUR128:VDUJ3
1,4,7:VDUJ2:PROCTING=K2X=1
1720PROCBAW
1730DEW=0:GOTO1650
1740W=4:PROCMAL2:Q=10:PROCMAL2:F=1:Q=12
:PROCR1:FORG=13 TO 20:PROCR2:NEXTM:PROG
R3:Q=25:PROCMAL1
1750IFAXE2=0:F=8:G=10:PROCT:F=16:PROCT
1760F=1=7:PROCT:P=17:PROG:F=1FJ32=0:CO
LOUR128:COLOUR1:VDUJ31,16,7:VDUJ212
1770F=13:Q=12:PROCR1:FORG=13 TO 20:P60
PROCR2:NEXTQ:PROCR3
1780IFK5X=0:COLOUR128:COLOUR1:VDUJ31,7,2
2:VDUJ212
1790PROCDE
1800PROCIM
1810IFK5X=0:IFX2=7:IFY2=22:PROCTING=K5X
=1
1820IFY3?3:Y2=24:PROCC:PROCFRONT1:GOTO8
630
1830IFK3X=0:IFX2=1:SANDY2=7:PROCTING=K3X
=1
1840IFX2=8:IFAXE1=1:IFAXE2=0:PROCTING=
VDU4:COLOUR128:VDUJ31,8,9:VDUJ2:VDUJ32:VDU
32:VDUJ2:VDUJ31,8,10:VDUJ32:VDUJ32:VDUJ32:VD
UJ32:AXE2=1:ST=5*30
1850GOTO1800
1860W=4:PROCMAL1:Q=10:PROCMAL2:JX=1:P=3
13:W=12:PROCR1:FORG=13 TO 23:PROCR2:NEXT
M:PROCR3:F=4:Q=12:PROCM
1870F=7:Q=22:PROCR:P=10:Q=25:PROCT:F=15
:Q=14:PROCR2
1880P=17:Q=7:PROCT:N=250:FORT=290 TO 5
60:STEP32:PROCRV1:NEXTM:P=3:Q=21:PROCR
1890IFAXE2=0:COLOUR128:COLOUR1:VDUJ31,
17,23:VDUJ216
1900IFD4X=0:COLOUR128:Q=9:PROCCDH
1910PROCDE
1920PROCIM
19301IFAX2=0:IFY2=23:PROCTING=AXE2=1

```

```

19401F042:0;1Fk47:1;1FV1:8;Q=9;PROCTING=
PROCDOME;D42=1
1950PROCBAR
19601Fk12:2;PROCD:K7=3;6;PROCLEFT1:60T016
00
1970DEZ=0;60T01920
1980Q=4;PROCDWALL1:Q=6;P=1;PROCR1:P=13;PR
OCR1:1;FORQ=7 TO 19;PROCR2:NEATQ:PROCR3:P=
1;FORQ=7 TO 19;PROCR2:NEATQ:PROCR3:P=2;
15
19901F052:0;COLOUR1:29;Y=12;FRGCDH
2000P=7;Q=7;FRGCT:P=1;1;PROCT:1Fk6=0;CO
LOUR2:VDU31,9,5;VDU212
2010Y=24;PROCDWALL2:PROCE
2020FROCH
20301F053:0;1Fk53:1;1FV1:14;PROCTING:Q=
12;PROCDOME:DS1=1
20401FV1:24;Y2=3;FRGCD:PROCDACK1:60T014
60
2050PROCBAR
20601Fk67:0;1FV1:6;PROCTING:67=1
2070DEZ=0;60T02020
2080Q=24;PROCDWALL2:Q=4;PROCDWALL1:Q=10;PRO
CDWALL1:FORM=350 TO 650STEP32;N=220;PROCR
IV1:N=1100;PROCRIV1:NEATM
2090P=13;Q=18;PROCT2:SK2=19
210Y=11;2;Q=15;PROCT:P=14;Q=12;PROCH:P=5
5;P=13;PROCT:COLOUR1:VDU31,3,5;VDU197;VDU
186;VDU31,7,6;VDU186;VDU189
21101Fk8:0;COLOUR1:28;COLOUR2:VDU31,16,
212;VDU212
2120FROCRE
2130FROCRE
21401FV1:24;Y2=3;PROCD:PROCDACK1:60T044
0
21501Fk83:0;1FV1:15;1FV1:21;PROCTING:83=8
2160FROCDH
2170DEZ=0;60T02130
2180Q=4;PROCDWALL1:Q=10;PROCDWALL1:Q=25;FRO
CDWALL1:P=2;Q=7;PROCT:P=13;Q=18;PROCR1:FOR
Q=19 TO 24;PROCR2:NEATQ:PROCR3
2190P=14;Q=17;PROCT:P=11;Q=14;PROCH:P=2
14;12;PROCH:N=220;FORM=290 TO 550STEP32
1;PROCRIV1:NEATM:F=7;Q=13;PROCH:P=21;Q=23;
PROCH
22001Fk102=0;COLOUR1:28;COLOUR2:VDU31,5,
20;VDU212
2210P=8;Q=26;PROCT:P=6;Q=19;PROCT
2220FROCRE
2230PROCCH
22401Fk102=0;1FV1:5;1FV1:21;PROCTING:81
02=1
22501FV1:16;Y2=2;PROCD:PROCRIGHT1:60T09
60
226060T02730

```

```

2270H=950;FURN=230  1000STEP40;PROCD
EVI=NE;TQ=11;PRGCM=2;Q=25;PROCDVAL=1;Q=19;
PRGCMVAL=2;P=21;Q=21;PRGCM=5=5;PROCD=P=15
PROCD=Q=2;PROCH
2280F=12;Q=13;PROCD=P=13;Q=15;PROCD=P=1
Q=13;PROCD=P=14 TO 20;PROCD=NEXTQ
PROCD3
2290J=17;FBI0X=0;CDLDIR130;Q=10;PROCD
CH
2300CDLDIR130;CDLDIR135;VBU31,9,4;VBU21
VBU210;VBU31,9,5;VBU219;VBU220;CDLDIR7;C
DLDIR130;VBU31,3,1a;VBU207;VBU206;VBU31
,3,1;VBU209;VBU210
231(F=7;Q=7;PROCD=P=11;PROCDT
2320FROCDRE
2330FROCD
2340(FX1,16;X1=2;PROCD=PROCDRIGHT1;GDTOR
90
2350(FY1=7;PROCF
2360FROCDBAR
2370(FY1=21;FBI0X=0;FBI1X=0;PROCDING;
Q=10;FROCDVOC1;D102=1
2380D=11
2390DEFPROCD
2400CDLDIR130
2410(FINKEY=(73)ANDINKEY=(105);GDT02520
2420(FPFR=ANDINKEY=(73)IFW=0;Y=Y-1;
PROCDRONT1;F=0;F02=1;RSG=0;BK=0;GDT02
440
2430(FFR=ANDINKEY=(73)IFW=0;Y=Y-1;
PROCDRONT2;F02=1;RSG=0;BK=0;GDT02
440
2440(FBK=0;IFINKEY=(105)IFW=0;Y=Y+1;
PROCDACK1;F=0;F02=2;FRK=0;RSG=0;GDT02
440
2450(FBK=0;IFINKEY=(105)IFW=0;Y=Y+1;
PROCDACK2;F02=2;FRK=0;RSG=0;GDT02
440
2460(FRSG=ANDINKEY=(67)IFW=0;Y=Y+1;
PROCDIGHT1;F=0;F02=3;FRK=0;RSG=0;GDT02
440
2470(FRSG=ANDINKEY=(67)IFW=0;Y=Y+1;
PROCDIGHT2;F=0;F02=3;FRK=0;RSG=0;GDT02
440
2480(FRSG=ANDINKEY=(98)IFW=0;Y=Y+1;
PROCDLEF72;RSG=0;RSG=0;F02=4;FRK=0;GDT02
640
2490(FRSG=ANDINKEY=(98)IFW=0;Y=Y+1;
PROCDLEF71;F02=4;FRK=0;RSG=0
2500(FINKEY=(73)ANDINKEY=(67);F02=5
2510(FBU=ENOFROCD
2520(FP02=1ANDINKEY=(74)FI=1
2530(FP11=1;PROCDIU
2540(FP02=ANDINKEY=(74)FI=1
2550(FP12=2;PROCDIU
2560(FP02=ANDINKEY=(74)FI=4
2570(FP12=4;PROCDIL
2580(FP02=ANDINKEY=(74)FI=3
2590(FP12=3;PROCDIR

```



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Phoenix

Ian Wooff

Over the next three weeks Ian Wooff explains how to customise Basic and provides very useful examples.

Part 1 - Adding commands to Basic

The following routine allows new commands to be added to Spectrum Basic by extending the Spectrum's interpreter held in ROM. This method works on the Spectrum, Spectrum+ and should work on 128K versions.

Although the Spectrum provides a comprehensive range of Basic commands there is always the desire to add more. The possibilities are endless, new graphic commands, commands to produce white noise, and lookit commands soon.

There are two different ways of adding new commands to basic. The first is to reuse the tokens which are already in use. For example, the CLS command might become CLS LENGTH, HEIGHT which would clear the given area of the screen. These new commands must fail the normal syntax checking in ROM.

The second method is to create new keywords, such as 'RENUIN' or 'FILL'. The 'X' is needed to get out of 'K' cursor mode. The star could be replaced by a dot, a question mark, or one of a variety of characters.

This article adopts the second method as although the definitions take more memory, it can be seen at a glance what they do.

The following routine demonstrates how new commands can be added to Basic, by adding a command to draw a box.

"BOX X,Coordinate,Y,Coordinate.BOX HEIGHT,BOX LENGTH

The X and Y co-ordinates point to the bottom left-hand corner of the box, the HEIGHT and LENGTH specifying the dimensions of the box in pixels.

Listing One is a Basic program which enters the extended interpreter into memory before saving it to tape. The extended interpreter recognises, checks the syntax, and executes the new commands, when they are used.

To use the new command enter listing one and run it. Once the code has been saved to tape type NEW <ENTER>, then enter and run listing two, to test the new command.

Any program which uses the extended interpreter must begin with the command 'RANDOMISE USR 64756' to turn the extended interpreter on. The commands CLEAR and NEW turn the extended interpreter off and so the above command must be used to turn it back on.

The new commands can be entered in either upper or lower case or a mixture of both. Spaces and colour codes can be added in the command at the user's will.

If the computer accepts a line containing a new command but produces the error report "Nonsense in BASIC", when the line is run then place a space in front of the new command. It is up to you to 'pad out' to new commands with spaces, if desired.

If the computer refuses to accept a line containing a new command it is probably because the extended interpreter is not turned on. To solve this place a REM command at the start of the line and the line will now be accepted by the computer. Then enter the following as a direct command, RANDOMISE USR 64756. This will turn the extended interpreter on. The REM command can now be removed from the line and the computer should accept the line, if the problem was caused by the extended interpreter being off.

The extended interpreter allows the new commands to have any form of parameters, numbers, functions, basic variables, strings etc. In short, if it's acceptable to the interpreter in ROM it is acceptable to the extended interpreter.

You may wish to alter the first character of the new command to something other than a star. To do this simply poke 64818 with code, ie, POKE 64818, CODE 'T'. The new character should remove the 'K' cursor mode.

Listing Three is disassembly of the code and shows how you can add further commands of your own.

As mentioned above the method of adding new commands is to extend the Spectrum's interpreter to include your own new commands. When the interpreter in ROM comes across something that it does not allow or understand it produces one of those enraging but useful error messages.

If we can get control before an error message is produced we could test to see if the error was caused by one of our new commands, and if so, deal with it.

To see if this is possible we need to look at what the Spectrum does with an error.

- 1) The address reached by the interpreter is copied into the error pointer X PTR.
- 2) The error code is put in ERR NR.
- 3) The stack pointer is loaded from ERR SP, so it points to the item at the bottom of the machine stack.
- 4) The calculator stack is cleared.
- 5) The machine code instruction RET removes the bottom item from the stack and control is given to this address.

At runtime the address removed by the RET instruction is 4867 (13038h). This halts the program and the correct error message is produced. During syntax checking this address is 4791 (12B7H), and causes the line to be displayed with a flashing cursor at the position which caused the error.

By placing the start address of our extended interpreter at the bottom of the machine stack control will be given to it when an error occurs. This seems fine, but where is the bottom of the machine stack?

The address of the bottom of the machine stack is held in the system variables at 23613/4 (5C3D/EH), and is known as ERR SP.

So all we need to do is to substitute the bottom of the machine stack, the address held in ERR SP with the address of our extended interpreter. When an error occurs the stack pointer is loaded from ERR SP and control is transferred to our extended interpreter using the RET instruction. This seems fine, but how do we know whether the program is being run and so the command needs executing, or is just having its syntax checked?

Here the system variables come to the rescue again. This time it is FLAGS at 23611 (5C36H). When a program is being run bit 7 of FLAGS is set, when syntax is being checked bit 7 of FLAGS is reset.

The first routine at 64756 places the start address of the extended interpreter at the bottom of the machine stack. This routine is 64756 (FCF4h), and so command RANDOMISE USR 64756 must be placed at the start of any program which uses the new commands to bring the extended interpreter into action.

During both syntax checking and runtime any new command will have error code 11 "Nonsense in BASIC", this code being held in the system variable ERR NR at 23610 (5C3AH). So the first job of our extended interpreter is to test ERR NR to see if it holds code 11. If it does not, control is given back to ROM.

If it does hold code 11 then the extended interpreter must test to see if the error was caused by one of our new commands. If it was, then its syntax must be checked and if required the command must be executed. To do this the extended interpreter uses three tables.

The first table used by the extended interpreter is the Command Table. This holds the command format data for all the new commands. Each entry in this table holds the form,

Command length, Command, parameter value (eg, 3, "BOX", 0).

The three represents the length of the new command "BOX", and the zero is the parameter value. The table must be ended with a byte which has bit 7 set. If in doubt add 128 (80h) to the end of the table.

The second table is the Parameter Table which holds the possible parameters which new commands may have. Multiple parameters are separated by commas.

PARAMETER	PARAMETER VALUE
Four numbers	0
Three numbers	2
Two numbers	4
One number	6
No parameters	8
One string	10
Two strings	12
One number and one string	14

It is possible to add new parameter formats such as three strings. To do this create a routine to check for three strings separated by commas, and add it to the extended interpreter. For example:

PROGRAMMING: SPECTRUM

call 7298 ;ROM routine to evaluate a string 1C8CH
call CQMMMA ;ex. interpreter routine test for a comma FDDAH
jp STR2 ;ex. interpreter routine evaluate 2 strings FD7BH

Add the address of this routine to the end of the Parameter Table and the new parameter value becomes 2 plus the last parameter value. Using this method any combination of parameters is possible for your new commands.

The third table is the Address Table. This holds the addresses of the routines which execute the commands during runtime. The values in this table must be the same order as the values in the Command Table.

The extended interpreter is able to handle 255 new commands. This value could easily be increased to 85535 new commands the only problem being that of memory which sets a practical limit of less

than 1000 new commands.

Some important points ■ bear in mind when adding your own new commands are:

1) The parameters are placed on the calculator stack in the reverse order to how they appear in the command. Use the extended interpreter routines GETBC and GETA to get and 8 bit or 16 bit numbers off the top of the calculator stack. Strings have a string descriptor placed on the stack. To find the address and length of the string use CALL 11249 (2BF1H). On return A equals one for a complete string, ie, old copy of string to be deleted, or zero if the string comes from an array of strings or is a 'slice' of a string. BC is set to the length of the string and DE is set to the start address.

2) The registers IY and HL must be set correctly as a return ■ Basic is being made. IY must always be 23610 (5C3AH), and HL must be 10072 (2758H) on returning.

3) The routines which execute the new

commands must be ended by a jump to the extended interpreter routine RET at 65197 (FEADH).

4) Two commands with the same name but different parameters are not allowed. For example, 'MOVE 10,10 and 'MOVE "SHIP", "LAND"'

5) New commands which are the same as Sinclair commands are allowed. For example 'PAUSE 100 and PAUSE 100 (Sinclair command 'M' key).

6) The letters making up new commands in the Command Table must be entered in upper case otherwise they will not be recognised by the extended interpreter.

7) If you wish to use a different separator to ■ comma then duplicate the routine COMMA 64986 (FDDAH), replacing the CP '■' with the desired character. The parameter routine will also need rewriting/amending to accept the new separator.

```
1 DEF FN h(a#)=FN h(a#11)+16+FN h(a#
(2)
2 DEF FN h(a#)=CODE a#-48-7*(a#)*91
10 CLEAR 64755
20 FOR a=64756 TO 65143 STEP 8
30 READ R#R
40 PRINT a;"-";R#;"=";"r
50 LET C=0
60 FOR g=0 TO 7: LET S=FN h(a#): LET R
=S*(13 TO )
70 POKE a#,S
80 LET C=C+1: NEXT g
90 IF C<7 THEN PRINT "ERROR IN LINE
";1000+(16+64756)*1.251: STOP
100 NEXT a
110 SAVE "EX. BASIC1"CODE 64756,308
1000 DATA "2A3D5C11FEFC7123",856
1010 DATA "70C93A35CFE0B28",826
1020 DATA "21FD0B17E200721",686
1030 DATA "FEFCESC3B712CD03",1339
1040 DATA "13F6360FF2A393C",894
1050 DATA "CDA71121FEFC93C",1352
1060 DATA "8412AF32CFE2150",807
1070 DATA "5C35E50FE1F2A20",1150
1080 DATA "D034002119FE0C8",1217
1090 DATA "007E20C52A35C5C",811
1100 DATA "D04600FE6FD0023",1223
```

```
1110 DATA "D0BE00201AE710FA",960
1120 DATA "F136A0FFD362600",907
1130 DATA "E1B06E011105FE26",871
1140 DATA "00195E2356E994B",780
1150 DATA "0C06000D09E12250",600
1160 DATA "SC2104FE3418BFC0",855
1170 DATA "8C1C0D04FC0B81C",1217
1180 DATA "181C0D021C1BF30F",905
1190 DATA "1814C07A1C0D04FD",1075
1200 DATA "C07A1C1809C07A1C",743
1210 DATA "C08AFC0C0821CFDC0",1495
1220 DATA "007E284C0D360008",560
1230 DATA "FE02804FE3A2040",719
1240 DATA "FD3600FFFD0C017E",1145
1250 DATA "201221FEFC521B7",1034
1260 DATA "12E9C3761821FEFC",1126
1270 DATA "ESC37153404FE07",1020
1280 DATA "6F1115FE1887DC0",1020
1290 DATA "007E28140FFD3600",716
1300 DATA "08FE2C2068FD3600",654
1310 DATA "FFE7C01FD360000A",1213
1320 DATA "C3A5F0C0052038F",1215
1330 DATA "20F41C9CDA2201B6",1156
1340 DATA "008FE099F094F39F",1361
1350 DATA "FD08F0B1FD7BF0B6",1537
1360 DATA "FD1FFE000003242F",686
1370 DATA "580800CDF3D377",1090
```

```
1380 DATA "FECDF7D3276FEC0",1586
1390 DATA "F7FD327E5CCDF7D",1473
1400 DATA "327D5CAFCD2B2D3A",790
1410 DATA "76FECDF6FE3A77FE",1373
1420 DATA "CD2B2D4FC0BFFFAF",1210
1430 DATA "CD2B2D3A76FEC02B",965
1440 DATA "20C0B6340B7454",694
1450 DATA "77FEC02B2DC0B634",1030
1460 DATA "AFCD6FEE215827D9",1122
1470 DATA "C3C9FDC02B2DC0B7",1327
1480 DATA "24C9000000000000",237
```

```
10 RANDOMIZE USR 64756
20 BORDER 0: PAPER 0: INK 7: CLS
30 OVER 1: GIM 64704
110 FOR a=1 TO 11: FOR d=6 TO 1 STEP -1
120 PRINT III 0,0; INK d;a; LET I=(a*7)
+d
130 POKE t,t,175-(2*t),255-(2*t)
140 NEXT d: NEXT a: FOR a=1 TO 35: PRINT
t AT 0,0; INK RND47;a; NEXT a
150 CLS: FOR s=1 TO 6: INK s
160 FOR a=(s-1)*8 TO 60 STEP 2
170 *BOX a,a,175-(2*a),255-(2*a)
180 NEXT a: NEXT s
190 PAUSE 0: RUN
```

```
** pass 1
** errors 11
** warnings 11
```

*PRINTER ON

```
FCF4= 10 ORG 64756
FCF4 2A3D5C 20 LD HL,(23613);
FCF7 01FEFC LD BC,START;
FCFA 71 LD (HL),C
FCFB 23 INC HL
FCFC 70 LD (HL),B;
FCFD C9 RET
FCFE 3A3A5C 30 START:LD A,(23610)
FD01 FE0B CP 11;
```

Address of bottom of stack
Start of extended interpreter

Place START on bottom of stack

Was error code 11, "Nonsense in BASIC" ?

PROGRAMMING: SPECTRUM

FD03 2821	JR Z,NONSENSE	
FD05 FDCB017E	40 SYNTAX:	Bit 7 of FLAGS set at runtime
	BIT 7,(IY+1) ;	
FD09 2007	JR NZ,RUNERROR	
FD0B 21FEFC	LD HL,START ;	Syntax error - Place START
FD0E E5	PUSH HL ;	on bottom of stack for next error
FD0F C3B712	JP #12B7 ;	Jump back to ROM
FD12 CD0313	50 RUNERROR:	
	CALL #1303 ;	Runtime error - Produce error report
FD15 FD3600FF	LD (IY+0),255 ;	Clear ERR NR
FD19 2A595C	LD HL,(23641) ;	Remove floating point forms from line in
FD1C CDA711	CALL #11A7 ;	editing area before doing a syntax check
FD1F 21FEFC	LD HL,START ;	Place START on bottom of
FD22 00	PUSH HL ;	stack for next error
FD23 C3B412	JP #12B4 ;	Jump back to ROM
FD26 AF	60 NONSENSE:	
	XOR A	
FD27 3204FE	LD (COM),A ;	Clear Command code
FD2A 215D5C	LD HL,23645 ;	CH ADD holds address reached by interpreter
FD2D 35	DEC (HL) ;	Decrease CH ADD to find character which
FD2E E5	PUSH HL	
FD2F DF	RST #18 ;	caused the error
FD30 E1	POP HL	
FD31 FE2A	CP "*" ;	Was it a star ?
FD33 20D0	JR NZ,SYNTAX ;	Error if not
FD35 34	INC (HL) ;	Increase CH ADD to point to the next
		character
FD36 DD2119FE	LD IX,COMTABLE ;	Index register, IX, points to Command Table
FD3A DDCB007E	70 LOOP10:	
	BIT 7,(IX+0) ;	Has the end of the table being reached ?
FD3E 20C5	JR NZ,SYNTAX ;	Error if it has
FD40 2A5D5C	LD HL,(23645)	
FD43 E5	PUSH HL ;	Save CH ADD
FD44 DD4600	LD B,(IX+0) ;	Transfere command length to B
FD47 DF	RST #18	
FD48 E6DF	80 LOOP11:	
	AND 223 ;	Reset bit 5. Quicker than RES 5,A
FD4A DD23	INC IX	
FD4C DBDE00	CP (IX+0) ;	Do characters match ?
FD4F 201A	JR NZ,NEXT ;	Jump to NEXT if they do not
FD51 E7	RST #20 ;	Increase CH ADD next character to A
FD52 10FA	DJNZ LOOP11	
FD54 FD3600FF	LD (IY+0),255 ;	Command found
FD58 FD362600	LD (IY+38),0 ;	Clear ERR NR and X PTR
FD5C E1	POP HL ;	remove CH ADD from stack
FD5D DD4E01	LD L,(IX+1) ;	Transfere parameter data to L
FD60 1105FE	90 LD DE,PARTABLE ;	Address of Parameter Table
FD63 2600	BACK1:LD H,0	
FD65 19	ADD HL,DE ;	Position of address in table
FD66 5E	LD E,(HL) ;	Transfere parameter address to DE
FD67 23	INC HL	
FD68 56	LD D,(HL)	
FD69 EB	EX DE,HL ;	Exchange DE and HL
FD6A E9	JP (HL) ;	Jump to contents of HL
FD6B 48	100 NEXT :LD C,B	
FD6C 0C	INC C	
FD6D 0600	LD B,0	
FD6F DD09	ADD IX,BC ;	Increase IX to start of next command
FD71 E1	POP HL	

PROGRAMMING: SPECTRUM

FD72 225D9C	LD (23645),HL ;	Restore CH ADD
FD75 2104FE	LD HL,COM	
FD78 34	INC (HL) ;	Increase Command code
FD79 18BF	JR LOOP10	
FD78 CD9C1C	110 STR2 :CALL #1C9C ;	Two strings after command
FD7E CDDAFD	CALL COMMA	
FD81 CD9C1C	STR1 :CALL #1C9C ;	One string after command
FD84 181C	JR LINEND	
FD86 CD921C	STRNUM:	
	CALL #1C92 ;	One number and string after command
FD89 18F3	JR STR2+3	
FD8B DF	NUM0 :RST #18 ;	Nothing after command
FD9C 1814	JR LINEND	
FD9E CD7A1C	120 NUM4 :CALL #1C7A ;	Four numbers after command
FD9F CDDAFD	CALL COMMA	
FD94 CD7A1C	NUM2 :CALL #1C7A ;	Two numbers after command
FD97 1809	JR LINEND	
FD99 CD7A1C	130 NUM3 :CALL #1C7A ;	Three numbers after command
FD9C CDDAFD	CALL COMMA	
FD9F CD821C	NUM1 :CALL #1C92 ;	One number after command
FDA2 FDCB007E	LINEND:	
	BIT 7,(IY+0) ;	Has there being an error ?
FDA6 284C	JR Z,SY1 ;	Jump if there has
FDA8 FD36000B	LD (IY+0),11	
FDAE FE0D	CP 13 ;	Is the next character code 13 or 58, ":" ?
FDAE 2804	JR Z,OK	
FDB0 FE3A	CP 58	
FDB2 2040	JR NZ,SY1 ;	Error if not
FDB4 FD3600FF	140 OK :LD (IY+0),255 ;	Reset ERR NR
FDB8 FDCB017E	BIT 7,(IY+1) ;	Bit 7 of FLAGS set at runtime
FDBC 2012	JR NZ,COMMAND	
FDBE 21FEFC	LD HL,START	
FDC1 E5	PUSH HL ;	Place START on bottom of stack
FDC2 218712	LD HL,#12B7	
FDC5 E5	PUSH HL ;	Followed by #12B7
FDC6 C3761B	JP #1B76 ;	Jump back to ROM
FDC9 21FEFC	150 RET :LD HL,START ;	Place START on bottom of stack
FDCD E5	PUSH HL	
FDCD C3761B	JP #1B76 ;	Jump back to ROM
FDD0 3A04FE	160 COMMAND:	
	LD A,(COM)	
FDD3 37	ADD A,A ;	Calculate position of command address
FDD4 6F	LD L,A ;	in Address Table
FDD5 1115FE	LD DE,ADDTABLE ;	Address to Address Table
FDD8 1809	JR BACK1 ;	Jump back to index into Address Table
FDDA FDCB007E	170 COMMA:BIT 7,(IY+0) ;	Did the last parameter cause an error ?
FDDC 2814	JR Z,SY1 ;	Jump if it did
FDE0 DF	RST #13	
FDE1 FD36000B	LD (IY+0),11	
FDE5 FE2C	CP ", " ;	Is the character a comma ?
FDE7 200B	JR NZ,SY1 ;	Error if not
FDE9 FD3600FF	LD (IY+0),255 ;	Reset ERR NR
FDED E7	RST #20 ;	Increase CH ADD
FDEE C9	RET	
FDEF D1	180 REPB :POP DE ;	Drop return address from stack
FDF0 FD36000A	LD (IY+0),10	
FDF4 C305FD	SY1 :JP SYNTAX	
FDF7 CDD52D	GETA :CALL #2DD5 ;	Top of calculator stack to A
FDFB 38F3	BACK2:JR C,REPB	

PROGRAMMING: SPECTRUM

```

FDFC 20F1      JR  NZ,REPB ;      Number out of range
FDFE C9        RET
FDFE CDA2D0    GETBC:CALL #2DA2 ;      Top of calculator stack to BC
FE02 18F6      JR  BACK2
FE04 00        190 COM :DEFB 0
FE05 8EFD99FD
      94FD7FFD
      8BFD81FD
      78FD86FD

PARTABLE:
      DEFW NUM4,NUM3,NUM2,NUM1,NUM0,STR1,STR2,STRNUM
;      Parameter Table
;      Contains address of parameter routines
FE15 1FFE0000
      ADDTABLE:
      DEFW BOX,0 ;      Address Table. Holds addresses of
;      routines which deal with commands
FE19 03424F58
      0080
      COMTABLE:
      DB 3,"BOX",0,#00 ;      Command Table. Contains command data
;      Table terminated by 80H. Command MUST
;      be in upper case letters
FE1F CDF7FD    260 BOX :CALL GETA
FE22 3277FE      LD (BLEN),A ;      Length of box
FE25 CDF7FD      CALL GETA
FE28 3276FE      LD (BHEI),A ;      Height of box
FE2B CDF7FD      CALL GETA
FE2E 327E5C      LD (23678),A ;      Y position of box
FE31 CDF7FD      CALL GETA ;      X position of box
FE34 327D5C      LD (23677),A
FE37 AF          290 XOR A
FE38 CD282D      CALL #2D28 ;      Stack 0
FE3B 3A76FE      LD A,(BHEI)
FE3E CD6FFE      CALL LINE ;      A=Height Draw first line
FE41 3A77FE      LD A,(BLEN)
FE44 CD282D      290 CALL #2D28 ;      Stack Length
FE47 AF          XOR A
FE48 CD6FFE      CALL LINE ;      A=0 Draw second line
FE4B AF          XOR A
FE4C CD282D      CALL #2D28 ;      Stack 0
FE4F 3A76FE      LD A,(BHEI)
FE52 CD282D      CALL #2D28 ;      Stack Height
FE55 CD6E34      CALL #346E ;      Negate top value on stack
FE58 CDB724      CALL #24B7 ;      Draw third line
FE5B 3A77FE      300 LD A,(BLEN)
FE5E CD282D      CALL #2D28 ;      Stack Length
FE61 CD6E34      CALL #346E ;      Negate top value on stack
FE64 AF          XOR A
FE65 CD6FFE      CALL LINE ;      A=0 Draw last line
FE69 215827      LD HL,#2758 ;      Reset HL* is destroyed by line drawing
FE6B D9          EXX
FE6C C3C9FD      JP RET ;      End command
FE6F CD282D      310 LINE :CALL #2D28 ;      Stack value in A
FE72 CDB724      CALL #24B7
FE75 C9          RET
FE76 00          320 BHEI :DEFB 0
FE77 00          BLEN :DEFB 0

```

```

** pass      2
** errors    0
** warnings  0

```

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Screen Wiz

A Kennedy

Load and save your Amstrad CPC screens, to tape, in a compact manner, including details such as the mode, ink and border.

The other utility increases the Baud rate. The commands are LOADSCREEN, SAVESCREEN, SUPERSPEED.

```
40 MEMO: 49CF
50 A=4900
60 S=0
70 FOR D=1 TO 24
80 READ B$
90 FOR C=1 TO LEN(B$) STEP 2
100 F=VAL("0"+MID$(B$,C,2))
110 POKE A,F
120 S=S+F
130 A=A+1
140 NEXT C,D
150 READ I
160 IF E<>S THEN PRINT "Sorry, Error in
DATA:END
170 CALL 49D00
```

```
180 PRINT "SAVESCREEN, LOADSCREEN & SUPE
RSPEED K&S have been installed."
190 NEW
200 DATA 010E9D210A9DC0D1
210 DATA B0C900000000199D
220 DATA C33890C37790C386
230 DATA 9053415645534352
240 DATA 4545CE4C4F414453
250 DATA 43524545CE535550
260 DATA 455253504545C400
270 DATA D021BF9DC011BCDD
280 DATA 7790C386C0D7001
290 DATA D071020610C5783D
300 DATA C035BCD07003D071
310 DATA 04D0230D3C110ED
```

```
320 DATA 21BF9D1123903E2A
330 DATA C09EBC2100C01100
340 DATA 403E2BCD9EBC921
350 DATA BF9D1123003E2ACD
360 DATA A1BCD021BF9D0D7E
370 DATA 00C0EBCD046010D
380 DATA 4E02CD388C0610C5
390 DATA 783D0D4603D04E04
400 DATA C032BCD0230D23C1
410 DATA 10ED2100C0110040
420 DATA 3E2BCDA1BCD921BC
430 DATA 003E32CD46BCD900
440 DATA 20648
```

Status

Barry Dorrans

This program for the BBC will list the status of the repeat delay and rate, sound, TAB value, ESCAPE, TUBE flag, SPEECH flag,

and available RAM. Simply run the program and the machine code at 8900 will be called to give the details.

```
10SBYTE=4FFF4
20SMRCH=4FFEE
30SNEM=4FFEE
40FOR pass=0 TO 3 STEP 3
50FX=4900
60OFF pass
71LDI 49FF:STI 480:JSR print
80LDI 48B:JSRfx
90LDI 48C:JSRfx
100LDI 48D:JSRfx
110LDI 48E:JSRfx
120LDI 48F:JSRfx
130LDI 490:JSRfx
140LDI 491:JSRfx
```

```
370LDI 48E:JSRfx
390LDI 48F:LDY 48F:LDX 480:JSR OSBYTE
:LDI 487:JSR OSRCH:CFY 480:BPL modelb
:LDI 486:JMP ret
391.modelb:LDI 485
4999.ret:JSR print:LDI 48C:JSR D
SMRCH:JMP OSNEM:RTS
5002.187:EQU "BASIC socket: 4"
5003EQU "Repeat delay: 4"
5004EQU "Repeat rate: 4"
5005EQU "Sound status: 4"
5006EQU "TAB value: 4"
5007EQU "<ESC> status: 4"
5008EQU "TUBE flag: 4"
```

```
5009EQU "SPEECH flag: 4"
5010EQU "RAM: 4"
6000.fx:LDY 48F:LDX 480:JSR OSBYTE:TXA:
JSR print:JSR OSNEM
7000.printLDY 48F:LDX 480:ugh:INY:INX:
LDI 487:JSR OSRCH:CFY 485:STX 480:BN
E ugh:kTS
10000.print:PHA:CLC:AND4F0:ROR
10010.ROR:ROR:ROR:JSRnyb:PLA:AND4F
10020.nyb CLC:ADC485:CHP48B:BCC number
10030.ADC485:number JMP4FFEE
20000:NEXT
30000CALL 4900
```

Sound FX

A Kennedy

Four types of sound effect are made easy with this program for the Amstrad CPC range. The effects and syntax, are EXPLODE, BANG, ZAP, and PING.

```
10 SOUND FX RSX
20 ' by Andrew Kennedy
30 '
40 MEMORY 49CF
50 A=4900
60 S=0
70 FOR D=1 TO 20
80 READ I
90 FOR C=1 TO LEN(I) STEP 2
100 F=VAL("0"+MID$(I,C,2))
110 POKE A,F
120 S=S+F
130 A=A+1
140 NEXT C,D
```

```
150 READ E
160 IF E<>S THEN PRINT "Sorry, Error in
DATA:END
170 CALL 49D00
180 PRINT "EXPLODE,BANG,PING & ZAP rxsx
have been installed."
190 NEW
200 DATA 010E9D210A9DC0D1
210 DATA B0C900000000199D
220 DATA C32F90C3459DC371
230 DATA 90C3389D4558594C
240 DATA 4F44C542414EC75A
250 DATA 41B050494EC70021
260 DATA 359DC3879D000000
```

```
270 DATA 000000F07101010
280 DATA 001E00000021489D
290 DATA C3879D0000000000
300 DATA 001F071010100004
310 DATA 00000021779DC387
320 DATA 906400C800C90000
330 DATA 38101010001E0000
340 DATA 0021619DC3879DCB
350 DATA 00C800C800003810
360 DATA 1010001400000006
370 DATA 00C57E4F78D348B0
380 DATA 23C10478FE020F1
390 DATA C9,12152
```

GOOD TIDINGS AND SMALL BILLS

When PCW last looked at Mercury Communications, the service was just becoming available to home and small business users. Savings of between 15 to 20 per cent on phone bills were claimed. Nine months later, Steve Gold looks back at how the system saves him a lot of money on phone bills...

It was about a year ago that I first heard that Mercury intended to offer an alternative telephone service to home and small business subscribers. At the time my phone bills from British Telecom were of the order of £800 to £1,000.

A year later - and after being subscriber to the Mercury 2300 service for nine months - my overall bills from Mercury and BT are down £450 a quarter - a saving of about 50% and way above Mercury's claimed call savings.

"How is this?" I hear you ask. Before explaining how, it's important to realise that computer modem users are unlike the average subscribers that Mercury pitches its promotional literature at.

Many modem users make a higher proportion of trunk telephone calls than typical residential customers. This is probably because most bulletin boards are an 'a' or 'b' rate trunk call away. Granted, BT's packet switch stream and Prestel services are available on a local call basis for many UK subscribers, but the majority of modem users have an innate desire to communi-

cate with the world - there's something inherently satisfying in communicating with a bulletin board at the other end of the country, rather than just across the city.

Mercury in perspective

As can be seen from the inset box, the Mercury 2300 service is not a direct replacement for BT services. Subscribers to Mercury must still rent their lines and - in the majority of cases - place local calls via British Telecom. At present Mercury 2300 subscribers can only achieve call cost savings on trunk and international routes.

For many modem users, however, trunk and international calls account for a major proportion of a telephone bill. Even with Prestel subscriptions all the rage, many modem users still make more than the odd call to bulletin boards several hundred miles distant.

Personal experience

Take my own bills for example. As a computer journalist (stop laughing at the back) who works from home, I make several calls a day to computer manufacturers, both in the UK and abroad, in a bid to get the news before my competitors.

I also edit frames on Micronel 800 on Prestel, as well as subscribing (and supplying) computer news to several electronic mail services both in the UK and abroad, which runs up the bills.

As a rough guide then, about £20 of my original BT-only bills is/was attributable to line and equipment rental, plus another £80

"It's important to realise that computer modem users are unlike the subscribers that Mercury pitches its promotional literature at."

or so per quarter for local calls. This still left a further £700 for trunk and international calls - many of which were made outside of the cheap rate periods.

My latest BT quarterly bill cost me about £140 - the extra £40 or so above my rental plus local calls estimate is for the small residue of trunk calls made via BT. My Mercury bills are rendered monthly and directly debited to my Visa credit card as a matter of course. A typical month's charges work out at about £100 - equivalent to £300 for the quarter as a whole.

The advantages of Mercury

As outlined in my article on Mercury earlier this year, the advantages which accrue from using Mercury 2300 in preference to BT for trunk and international calls include clearer calls, as well as lower call costs.

In addition to this, the Mercury service centre now offers a complete BT-style operator and directory enquiry service. Like BT, Mercury calls to the operator and

"After being a subscriber to the Mercury 2300 nine months, my overall bills from Mercury and BT are down £450 a quarter."



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joysticks* Cables

directory enquiry positions are free of charge. Service is much improved over BT's. This is probably due to the relatively low number of subscribers to Mercury 2300 - 10,000 at the last count, but that figure is rising fast.

Still, I now find it possible to get a call to Mercury directory enquiries answered within 20 seconds, regardless of what time of the day or night a call is placed. Compare that to the delays experienced in the late evening or middle of the night for the BT service and I think you'll agree. Mercury directory enquiry service is infinitely better.

Mercury operators are also able to interrogate your billing files at all times - another plus when you want to ask a billing question on Sunday morning. Add to that a really friendly service, and the human element of Mercury calls is big plus in the service's favour.

The disadvantages

Contrary to what you might think from the foregoing, there are still disadvantages in using Mercury 2300 over the BT service for trunk and international calls. These include

- **Call delays** - Using BT, it rarely takes longer than 15 seconds before a tone is heard on an inland direct dialled call - either ringing or engaged signals - the vast majority of cases. Because Mercury 2300 calls must pulse dial the three digit Mercury access code (usually 131) then go onto Mercury using a ten digit ID code, take an average of 10 to 15 seconds longer to complete via Mercury 2300 than it made via BT. In practice, this delay is only a minor niggle.

- **Network failure** - Because the Mercury network is so new, and relies upon BT to interconnect calls at both ends of the circuit, there is more to go wrong with a typical trunk call. On at least three separate occasions over the past six months the Mercury network has been down for a period of between 20 and 120 minutes. To be fair to Mercury, these failures only occurred at relatively off-peak times - Saturday or Sunday mornings. Calls via British Telecom can be made as normal during such times, so telephone service is not entirely unavailable.

- **Intermittent network failure** - Some calls fail because the Mercury access ports on 131 are either engaged or simply ring out. Redialling the call normally solves the problem. For the inexperienced or novice user of Mercury 2300 however, an engaged Mercury port could be construed as the engaged tone on the number dialled.

- **Poor quality circuits** - As can be seen from the network map, Mercury currently covers much of the UK's major centres of population, with extensions into Scotland and the south coast promised by the end of October. Despite such limitations, Mercury

accepts calls to any UK destination, relying on BT circuits to complete the call to areas where Mercury service is not yet available. On some calls to the far north of Scotland and west of Cornwall, call quality is relatively poor and therefore unsuitable for modern use. Such calls - admittedly few and far between - require the use of BT for successful use of a modern. This factor accounts for the extra £40 or so on my quarterly BT phone bill.

Apart from these problems, Mercury 2300 service is far superior to that provided by BT. Eventually, BT will catch up with Mercury, but it will take until at least 1995.

What is Mercury 2300?

The Mercury 2300 service allows residential and small business users to access the Mercury network via existing telephone lines. Provided you have one of the new square pin plugs on your telephone, all you need is a Mercury smart phone (cost £51.95 including VAT), plus a Mercury authentication ID (£7.50 plus VAT a year).

Once programmed, you use your Mercury phone for all your calls - dialling as usual for local calls (via BT), but pressing the blue 'M' (for Mercury) button in prefix to the trunk and international access codes.

Mercury then bills all your trunk and international calls - individually itemised and costed - each month or quarter. You continue to rent your ordinary phone line from British Telecom, and place local calls via BT as normal. Trunk calls are also available - albeit at greater cost than via Mercury - as normal.

The advantages over BT service - which Mercury only supplements, not replaces - include call itemisation, lower costs and clearer circuits.

Mercury 2300 service is currently available in most major centres of population (see network map).

before true digital call quality - as seen on Mercury circuits - becomes available on the BT network.

Call savings explained

As I've already mentioned, Mercury claim typical trunk call savings of between 15 and 25 per cent. In my own case, however, these savings amount to about 50 per cent. After some thought on the matter, I attribute the considerable call savings to the following factors:

- **Fewer data errors** - Since many of my modern calls involve the use of an error correction protocol - MNP for high-speed modem calls, and Kermit or Xmodem for file transfers - the number of corrupt data

packets is considerably reduced. Mercury circuits rarely give any problems at V23 (1200 baud) or V22bis (2400 baud).

- **Faster modem speeds** - Because Mercury 2300 uses digital-quality circuits, compared with BT's predominantly analogue network, call circuits are better able to support the higher modem speeds such as V22 (1200 baud) and V22bis (2400 baud).

- **More incoming calls** - Because of the faster modem speeds, my home phone line is engaged for shorter periods, allowing more time - particularly during office hours - for people to call me, instead of leaving messages for me to call them on my London voicebank answerphone.

Mercury's future enhancements

At the time of writing, Mercury has just completed reciprocal agreements with the telecommunication authorities in Japan and Scandinavia. Further agreements are pending with other international telecommunication authorities.

Such agreements open up call savings of as much as 20% over BT call costs on international calls - savings already seen on transatlantic calls to the US and Canada. Currently, Mercury is obliged to hand over much of its international call traffic to BT, allowing it to pass on only a small call savings (between 2 and 4 per cent) as its 'agent's commission' for handing the call.

Retransmission from Mercury to BT can also add to the general line noise and lack of signal quality on international calls. This factor tends to negate the call quality advantages of placing calls over the Mercury national network. Once direct connection between Mercury and the rest of the world is available, better call quality - perhaps to digital standards - will be available.

Conclusions

In my first article on Mercury, I suggested that anyone with a quarterly telephone bill - modem user or not - in excess of £75 would be well-advised to consider Mercury as an additional extra to their telephone service.

Since that article, I calculate that figure as a little conservative and - allowing for a two year payback period on the £51.95 smart phone - suggest a figure £70 as the point beyond which most modem users would benefit financially from using Mercury 2300.

Even if your phone bill is below the £70 mark - and there can be few modem users with bills at such low levels - the digital call quality benefits to be derived from Mercury 2300 are still worth the investment. Some Hayes-compatible modem users will find that, if their modem has a tone dialling option, then a smart phone is not needed. At £7.50 (plus VAT), Mercury 2300 telephone service is a bargain not to be missed.

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Mind how you go round the hoola-hoops

My first reaction when I saw *Supersprint* loaded up was mild disbelief. Instead of the *Pole Position*-type game that I was expecting (that presents you with a view of the track from the driver's seat), what I got was an overhead view of a race track with a few tiny little car shapes on it.

Not exactly state-of-the-art. But although the game might initially seem to be a bit unsophisticated it turns out to be surprisingly playable.

You are given a choice of eight tracks of varying difficulty. The simplest of these are basically straight stretches of road joined by a couple of bends, while the hardest ones look like a pile of hoola hoops. Once you've made your choice, a white flag waves and the computer-controlled cars ('drones') zoom off around the nearest bend, leaving you wondering what's happening.

Controlling your car is simple: press 'fire' to accelerate, and choose two keys or joystick to

control your direction. There are no brakes, but as soon as you stop accelerating you'll find that you slow down pretty quickly. It takes a little bit of practice to get the hang of steering, and

unless you're moving very fast in which case you'll burst into flames. Fortunately you've got three replacement cars which are flown onto the course by helicopter, so ■ is not lost.



you ought to be careful about how fast you travel ■ first. ■ you hit the side of the track you should just bump to a halt,

Some ■ the tracks have underpasses, and you are driving blind as you go through these, so again you'll need a steady hand to keep your car on the track.

Better with two

After a few bumps into the side of the track and a couple of laps in the wrong direction, it occurred to me that it was all quite good fun. Like the recent comeback that the simple shoot 'em up has made, *Super Sprint* demonstrates that a game can be unsophisticated but still fun. But I should add that like a lot of sports-based games, *Super Sprint* is much better when two people play it together.

As you skid your way around

the various tracks you attempt to avoid a number of obstacles, such as oil slicks and puddles, and there is a tornado (which looks like a fingerprint) which smudges its way across the screen occasionally and blows you all over the place. There are also ■ number ■ golden spanners (these look like squashed frogs) which give you bonuses when you collect them. If you collect three or more of these then you get an additional custom car feature, such as Turbo acceleration, traction, and ■ higher top speed, which give you a better chance of winning.

In some ways the overhead view of the track works better than the *Pole Position* type of game, since it gives you a clear view of what's happening around you, and you're not like, ■ surprised by a car appearing behind you and sending you skidding out of control. On the other hand, it does mean that the size of the track is restricted by the size of the screen display, so the amount of variation in each track is similarly restricted.

But my only real doubt about the game is its price. Any game that costs £9.99 really ought to be pretty spectacular and/or original, and since *Super Sprint* is only another coin-op conversion I think Activision are pushing it a little here.

Cliff Joseph



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Program Flash Gordon Type Arcade Price £2.99 **Supplier** Mastertronic, 8-10 Paul Street, London EC2A 4JH

Program Beach Head II Type Arcade Price £2.99 **Supplier** Americana, 8-10 Paul Street, London EC2A 4JH

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Program Gossamer Type Arcade Price £1.99 **Supplier** Mastertronic, 8-10 Paul Street, London EC2A 4JH

Program Angledrive Type Arcade Price £2.99 **Supplier** Mastertronic, 8-10 Paul Street, London EC2A 4JH

Atari ST

Program 3D Galax Type Arcade Price £19.95 **Supplier** Gremlin Graphics, Alpha House, 10 Carver Street, Sheffield S1 4FS

Atari XL/XE

Program Dizzy Dice Type Fruit machine simulation Price £1.99 **Supplier** Players, Calvea Park, Aldermaston, Berks

BBC B

Program Jet Pac Type Arcade Price £1.99 **Supplier** Ricochet, 8-10 Paul Street, London EC2A 4JH

Commodore C16/Plus 4

Program Dizzy Dice Type Fruit machine simulation Price £1.99 **Supplier** Players, Calvea Park, Aldermaston, Berks

Commodore 64

Program Hyperblob Type Arcade Price £2.99 **Supplier** Firebird, 64-70 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1PS

Program Anarchy Type Arcade Price £1.99 **Supplier** Rack-it, 8-10 Paul Street, London EC2A 4JH

Program Games Set and Match Type Sports compilation Price £12.95 (£17.95) **Supplier** Ocean, 5 Central Street, Manchester M2 5NS

Program Tallegda Type Arcade Price £2.99 **Supplier** Americana, 8-10 Paul Street, London EC2A 4JH

Program Saracen Type Arcade Price £2.99 **Supplier** Americana, 8-10 Paul Street, London EC2A 4JH

Program Beach Head II Type Arcade Price £2.99 **Supplier** Americana, 8-10 Paul Street, London EC2A 4JH



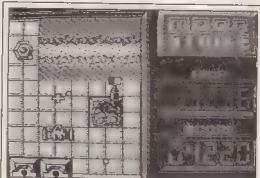
Program Bismarck Type Wargame Price £9.95 (£14.95 on disc) **Supplier** PSS, 452 Stoney Stanton Road, Coventry

Program Annals of Rome Type Wargame Price £12.95 (£17.95 on disc) **Supplier** PSS, 452 Stoney Stanton Road, Coventry

Program Dizzy Dice Type Fruit machine simulation Price £1.99 **Supplier** Players, Calvea Park, Aldermaston, Berks

Program Scrabble Deluxe Type Board game Price £12.95 cassette (£15.95 on disc) **Supplier** Virgin Games, 2-4 Vernon Yard, Portobello Road, London W11 2DX

continued on page 60 ▶



Moonstrike is a sedate little shoot 'em up, whose chief claim to fame is that some of the nasties that plummet down from the top of the screen are shaped like light bulbs. That aside, it is a competent but not outstanding addition to the massed ranks of zap games.

The format of the game is fairly standard; you fly a small spacecraft over the surface of a planet, which is divided into sectors, attempting to bomb a number of land targets at the same time as dodging or destroying the airborne weapons that are aimed at you. You are armed with two types of weapons, a laser mounted on your wing tips for air to air combat, and bombs for the ground targets. The bombs are aimed with a cursor which moves just in front of you, and pressing the fire button at the same time as pulling back on the joystick releases the bomb. At first, switching between the two weapons was a bit tricky, and caused a lot of lost lives, but you should soon get the hang of it.

The graphics are quite nice, not a lot of colour has been used but that has allowed the programmers to add a lot of detail to the graphics. However there are a few things which cause the game to fall short of shoot 'em up heaven. For a start, only half the screen is used as playing area (the other half is devoted entirely to the score table and **Moonstrike** logo, which is a bit of a waste) so you don't have very much room to manoeuvre in. And, as the ship doesn't move all that fast, it can get a bit frustrating finding yourself penned in as often as I did. (On one occasion, just as I passed into sector two, a huge '2' flashed onto the screen obscuring what was going on and causing me to get blown up.)

There's a problem with the laser too, as you can only have one set of shells on screen at a time (like the old **Space Invaders**), and if you miss a target you have to wait for the shell to go off the top of the screen before you can fire again, so you never really get to work up to the frantic pace of the best shoot 'em ups. So, while **Moonstrike** is a fairly professional effort, it doesn't quite reach the sheer speed and addictiveness that you might look for in this type of game.

Stephen Dean

Program Moonstrike Type Arcade Machine Spectrum Price £7.95 **Supplier** Mirrosoft, Athena House, 66-73 Shoe Lane, London EC4P 4AB

NEW RELEASES

◀ continued from page 59

Program Tunnel Vision Type Arcade
Price £2.99 Supplier Rack-It,
8-10 Paul Street, London EC2A
4JH

Program Angioball Type Arcade
Price £2.99 Supplier Mastertronic,
8-10 Paul Street, London EC2A
4JH

Program Streetbeat Type Arcade
Price £1 ■ Supplier Mastertronic,
8-10 Paul Street, London EC2A
4JH

Program Bosconian Type Arcade
Price £1.99 Supplier Mastertronic,
8-10 Paul Street, London EC2A
4JH

Program Wizard's Par Type Arcade
Price £2.99 Supplier Mastertronic,
8-10 Paul Street, London EC2A
4JH

Program Sunburst Type Arcade
Price £2.99 Supplier Hewson
Hawson House, 569 Milton Trading
Estate, Milton Abingdon Oxon
OX14 4RX

Program Motors Type Arcade Price
£2.99 Supplier Mastertronic, 8-10
Paul Street, London EC2A 4JH

Program Ubik's Music Type Utility
Price £2.99 Supplier Firebird,
64-76 New Oxford Street, London
WC1A 1PS

Program Solomon's Key Type
Arcade Price £3.99 Supplier US
Gold, Units 2/3, Holford Way, Hol
ford, Birmingham B6 7AX

Spectrum

Program Scribble Deluxe Type
Board game Price £10.95 for 120K
cassette (£15.95 on +3 disc) Sup
plier Virgin Games, 2-4 Vernon
Yard, Portobello Road, London W11
2DX

Program Game Set and Match
Type Sports compilation Price
£12.95 (£17.95) Suppliers Ocean, 6
Central Street, Manchester M2 5NS

Program Beach Head II Type Arcade
Price £2.99 Supplier Americana,
8-10 Paul Street, London EC2A
4JH

Program Angioball Type Arcade
Price £2.99 Supplier Mastertronic,
8-10 Paul Street, London EC2A
4JH

Program Saracen Type Arcade
Price £2.99 Supplier Americana,
8-10 Paul Street, London EC2A
4JH

Program Jet Pac Type Arcade
Price £1.99 Supplier Ricochet,
8-10 Paul Street, London EC2A
4JH

Program Keweenaw Type Arcade
Price £2.99 Supplier Americana,

8-10 Paul Street, London EC2A
4JH

Program Ocean Conqueror Type
Arcade Price £2.99 Supplier Rack-
It, 8-10 Paul Street, London EC2A
4JH

Program Super Nova Type Arcade
Price £1.99 Supplier Players, Cal
leva Park, Aldermaston Berks

Program Draughts Genius Type
Arcade Price £2 ■ Supplier Rack-
It, 8-10 Paul Street, London EC2A
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Program Rescue Type Arcade
Price £1.99 Supplier Mastertronic,
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Program Bosconian Type Arcade
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8-10 Paul Street, London EC2A
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Program Car Wars Type Arcade
Price £2.99 Supplier Firebird
64-76 New Oxford Street, London
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Program Play It Again Sam Type
Arcade Price £2.99 Supplier Mas
tertronic, 8-10 Paul Street, London
EC2A 4JH

Program Pageant of Life Type
Sound game Price £9.95 Supplier
Solidum, 21 Ashbourne Way, That
cham Berks

IBM PC and Compatibles



Program World Tour Golf Type
Sport simulation Price £19.95 Sup
plier Electronic Arts, Langley Busi
ness Centre, 11-49 Station Road,
Langley, Nr Slough, Berks SL3 8YN

Program Arctic Fox Type Arcade
Price £19.95 Supplier Electronic
Arts, Langley Business Centre,
11-49 Station Road, Langley, Nr
Slough, Berks SL3 8YN

Program Marble Madness Type
Arcade Price £19.95 Supplier Elec
tronic Arts, Langley Business Cen
tre, 11-49 Station Road, Langley,
Nr Slough, Berks SL3 8YN

You can tell when Christmas is coming because all of last year's big hits start to crop up on compilations. The first of this year's batch arrived with Elite's 6-Pak Volume 2.

Out of the six games five are re-releases, while one, *Batty*, is unreleased. This isn't very surprising when you realise that *Batty* is actually a *Breakout* clone along the lines of *Arkanoid*. It has all the bonus features found in *Arkanoid* (slow ball, laser, extra lives) as well as the addition of a ball which turns into a fireball, destroying everything in its path. Unoriginal but enjoyable.

Another clone on the tape is *Pandora's Eagle's Nest*. This is one of the best of the recent *Gauntlet* clones, in fact it's so good and so recent that I'm surprised to find it on a compilation so soon. It puts the action in a World War II scenario rather than the usual fantasy setting, but the game is still good old *Gauntlet*.

ACE is about the oldest game on the tape. Flight simulators normally bore me silly, but this is more of an action game than a simulator so it's thumbs up for ACE. *Endurance's International Karate* is also one of the better examples of its type. You've got about sixteen different moves to master, so you'll need to be totally ambidextrous, but it's all good inscrutable fun if you can master it.

FTL's *Shockwave Rider* is the only game that I'm not totally enthusiastic about. It's an odd game that reminds me of a sci-fi story I read ages ago. You are travelling along a series of moving walkways, some of which move at higher speeds. Your aim is to travel through twelve districts, fighting street gangs and dodging lanes.

On the other hand, the second FTL game, *Lightforce*, is probably the highlight of the compilation. This is far and away my favourite shoot 'em up of all time. It's fast, furious, colourful and totally wonderful.

Obviously the value of any compilation depends upon how many of the games you've already got. But if you don't already have these games then 6-Pak Vol. II is excellent value.

Stephen Dean

Program 6-Pak Volume 2 Type Compilation Machine
Amstrad CPC, C64, Spectrum Price £9.95 ■ cassettes
(£14.95 C64 and CPC disc) Supplier Elite, Anchor House,
Anchor Road, Aldridge, Walsall, West Midlands

CHARTS

Top Twenty

1	(1)	Run for Gold	Alternative
2	(3)	BMX Simulator	Code Masters
3	(2)	Paperboy	Elite
4	(8)	Super Robin Hood	Code Masters
5	(9)	Crocket International	Alternative
6	(4)	Milk Race	Mastertronic
7	(7)	Destructo	Buildgold
8	(6)	Road Runner	US Gold
9	(11)	Soccer Boss	Alternative
10	(31)	Joe Blower	Players
11	(12)	World Class Leaderboard	Access-US Gold
12	(14)	Living Daylights	Domark
13	(13)	Barbarian	Palace
14	(32)	Decathlon	Firebird
15	(5)	Exolon	Hewson
16	(15)	International Karate	Endurance
17	(25)	Olympic Spectacular	Alternative
18	(22)	Back To The Future	Firebird
19	(37)	Tournament Leaderboard	Access-US Gold
20	(30)	ATV Simulator	Code Masters

All figures compiled by Gallup/Computer Trade Weekly

Of mice and men

As a regular reader of *Popular*, I could hardly fail to notice its enthusiasm regarding the Atari ST computer. Feeling the need to upgrade from my Sinclair Spectrum, I was also very interested in it, and finally bought a 520STFM and SC1224 colour monitor a few months ago. Potential purchasers may be interested in my verdict:

Every computer has its faults and dare I be the first (?) to publicise those of the ST in *Popular*.

I was slightly disappointed with the GEM operating system, but only because I've been spoiled by the Macintosh (which I have access to at University). It is a shame that DR did not take time to improve on the desktop concept (which I am sure is possible), instead of producing an imitation which is not as comprehensive. For example, icons cannot be repositioned within a window and file names are restricted to eight letters with an three letter extension. Double clicking requires daily finger exercises unless you copy the control panel accessory onto every disc to slow the mouse down. These are minor gripes however: GEM is an effective WIMP environment and makes the ST one of the most friendly home computers around.

Another minor gripe: there may be 512 colours available, but a large number of these are extremely similar shades of red or green. Although having two buttons on the mouse is an unforgivably daft idea, you do get used to it since most software designers with their heads screwed on only use one of them (the left). But the right button is there, and those without their heads screwed on can easily fall into the trap of using it (eg *Neochrome*). Sometimes, as in the case of *Arena* (an athletics simulation), the programmers seem to have no idea what the mouse is there for, and the user is

at first completely baffled by the menus which need \equiv be double clicked.

But, let's face it, the best thing about the ST is its price. It is cheaper now than many 8-bit computers (Commodore 64 + Disk drive, BBC); and yet infinitely more powerful. My niggles about the operating system are really a wider criticism of all operating systems: even the Mac is frustrating at times, and a breakthrough in artificial intelligence is required to make a computer more friendly than that. Manufacturers I think should spend more time and effort on the "man/machine interface" as well as the hardware, since this is one program which will be used regularly by everyone who buys the computer. Even though I can't afford a Macintosh, Apple remains my favourite computer company. As you read this, Apple programmers are using the Cray Supercomputer to design the operating environment for their next generation of computers; while Atari is meddling with the Imros Transputer for the ultimate in speed; the operating system may be a last minute consideration. Acorn also has designed the fastest micro around, but hastily botched in a Wimp written in Basic; the hardware of the Archimedes can support a much more advanced system to control it.

The ST is an important machine because it ducks under the price point beyond which the British Public wouldn't buy it. Machines as powerful as this have been around for years, but only now have they entered the home computer niche. Atari have made a big step forward for the computer industry because people will look over our shoulders and see that computers have become friendlier since the Sinclair Spectrum days. Perhaps there is another home computer boom in the offing?

Andrew McOwan

This week, due to overwhelming demand, we have decided that it is about time to launch a new puzzle.

And it has also been decided that the best people to think of a new format for the puzzle would be you, the readers.

So, in essence, this week's puzzle is to think of a puzzle; which will start the week after next.

As with all other puzzles, the person who invents the most interesting format for the new puzzle (phew this is getting confusing, Ed!) will receive a prize, which for this special case will be £20.

Because this is such an important decision, we have decided to run this 'design a puzzle' competition for two weeks, so the closing date is October 16.

Send all your ideas to Puzzle Ideas, *Popular Computing Weekly*, Greencoat House, Francis Street, London SW1R 1DG.

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